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RUSSIAN ROULETTE:

DISINFORMATION IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND NEWS MEDIA

by

Thomas Nicholas O'Brien

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This study examines the impact and influence of disinformation on the press and on U.S. foreign policy. It reviews the history of disinformation with reference to published news reports and original research derived from interviews with media correspondents and government officials. It surveys the literature pertaining to Soviet disinformation campaigns and practises, including U.S. Congressional testimony, and examines the implications of domestic disinformation programs sponsored by the U.S. Government. The study makes recommendations pertaining to journalists and government public affairs officers in regards to their exposure to disinformation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the 80s draw to a close, headlines about foreign events report new openness and restructuring of the Soviet Union. As an active Army public affairs officer, the author recognizes the importance of an open and truthful dialogue among governments, and between governments and the media. "Glasnost" and "perestroika" have elicited "confidence-building measures" for the two super powers -- onsite inspection of military facilities and observation of NATO and Warsaw Pact training exercises.

This apparent shift in Soviet policy does not negate the fact that both sides of the Cold War are still engaged in a systematic game of Russian roulette. A part of this phenomena is the exchange of information whereby the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. may be trying to deceive one another, a tactic called disinformation; a communciations tool used to mislead an adversary by purposely disseminating false information.

With regard to the media, both governments have at times lacked candor. The Soviet Union coopts the Western media through its foreign policy strategy of "active measures," a broad concept of deception which includes disinformation, and so may the U.S. government. In this thesis the author documents cases of American and Soviet disinformation in the American press. Does the U.S. also deliberately lie to the news media?

With this question in mind, this thesis is an attempt to come to grips with disinformation in the news media as practiced by both the Soviet Union and the United States.

Apart from simply documenting cases of disinformation, this thesis examines disinformation to determine what it is, what the goals are, how it is implemented, what role the news media play, and how it can be exposed. New pieces of government disinformation may be revealed during the Iran-Contra Hearings as the anti-Qadhafi campaign possibly masked the large scale Iranian involvement in international terrorism. Libyan-aimed rhetoric filled magazines, newspapers and TV screens while weapons deals to help secure hostages remained covert.

The word 'disinformation' is a translation of a Russian word 'dezinformatsia' and its roots can be traced back to the ancient techniques of deception and illusion. The term 'disinformation' began first appearing in the 1970s in the research work of John Barron and Arnaud de Borchgrave, gained additional significance from Congressional testimony of former Czech intelligence officer Ladislav Bittman and former KGB intelligence officer Stanislav Levchenko, and became a prime time expression following disclosure of the anti-Libyan campaign in October 1986. Chapter II provides the theoretical rationale as to why the U.S. government may be ill-served in trying to deceive the press and the American public with disinformation, deception and propaganda of the kind often aimed at external audiences by the Voice of America and the United States Information Agency.

The inception of disinformation can be traced back to the Fifth Century B.C. in the writings of the Chinese authority on warfare, Sun

Tzu, who described the means to achieve final victory before the actual fighting began. His strategy to win called for deception and subversion before direct warfare was initiated. A means to his end was to provide deliberately misleading information or disinformation to disrupt or confuse the enemy. Chapter III presents an overview of disinformation, discussing its background and defining terms such as deception and propaganda.

Active Measures comprise a broad concept of both covert and overt activities which are integral to the Soviet Union's foreign policy. Active Measures are influence operations as opposed to espionage and counter-intelligence, and they involve virtually every element of the Soviet party's organizational structure. Chapter IV discusses Soviet Active Measures as an international strategy and provides specific examples of the KGB's disinformation programs.

Though generally regarded as a term to describe Soviet activities, two U.S. initiatives can be lumped under the category of active measures when illuminated in the light of 'influencing events and behavior by deception.' Chapter V details the account of the B-1B bomber as an example of military disinformation to preserve an Air Force program laden with poor management techniques, contractor shortcomings, operational deficiencies and broken promises.

The most publicized example of a U.S. initiative occurred in October 1986 when the anti-Libya disinformation campaign was uncovered. The news media finally surfaced U.S. government disinformation despite prior attempts by journalists: nationally syndicated columnists Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta raised the issue of U.S. disinformation by

the CIA back in 1981; George Wilson, at the time the Pentagon correspondent for the Washington Post, accused the Department of Defense of lying about troop movements to trick the Soviet Union in 1983; in the spring of 1986, David M. North of Aviation Week and Space Technology and Evert Clark and Dave Griffiths writing for Business Week, began linking reports of disinformation to U.S. government agencies such as the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. Only when the anti-Libya program was exposed did the news media finally place U.S. government disinformation in the spotlight.

Chapter VI contains interviews with selected opinion leaders and discusses their perspectives on disinformation. The purpose of the interviews is to establish what disinformation is, how it is accomplished, who uses it and why, and how it is regarded. Professionals from academe, government and the news media who are knowledgeable in the methods of Soviet Active Measures were queried.

Western societies have always been exposed to manipulative influences and deceptions from the Soviet Union. American foreign policy has been basically designed to protect Western countries and repress Soviet expansion. One possible counter to Active Measures may be U.S.-produced disinformation; but will the dissemination of false information by our government contaminate a democracy? This question and related others will be discussed in this thesis.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESS AND FEDERAL POLICYMAKING

Information is dispersed throughout the American society daily. The mediums vary; be it interpersonal communication between two people, or Tom Brokaw broadcasting nationwide. Technologies such as cable, satellites and computer-enhanced communications are shrinking McLuhan's "global village" and are overwhelming the public with data. The utopian goal in an information society would be for increased awareness of the public by fine-tuning their skills as consumers of mass-mediated communications.

The ability to interpret new information is important for the public to make decisions, to act or to react rationally. Of even greater importance is the ability of our leaders in government, the opinion leaders, the gatekeepers in the media, the ones who set the agenda, to examine the facts and then process that data so as to execute their office in the best interests of the nation. Of equal importance is their ability to decode the data to determine its accuracy. This may be their toughest duty.

To illustrate this point, one should look at the 'meeting,' one of the foremost events of a bureaucracy where there is a potential hazard

in the distribution of information. A State Department spokesman proposed an example in a somewhat different context:

> "It's like the old game that kids play. You whisper in somebody's ear and pass it down through ten people. By the time it gets to the tenth person it's distorted. It's not a deliberate attempt on anybody's part to distort anything. It just sometimes happens."[1]

The ill-informed official suffers a loss of credibility whereas the misinformed newspaper which publishes erroneous news suffers significant embarrassment. A loss of credibility and embarrassment happen when the public is enlightened to the fact that they have been deceived, be it unintentionally or by design. The big problems arise when there is a deliberate attempt to pass on false information or to 'disinform.' This chapter will examine the function of the U.S. government to make available information about how it is governing, what role the media plays, and the importance of providing for the free flow of accurate information within a democracy. The initial focus will be on the news media followed by the government's interface; the ill-effects of disinformation will conclude the chapter.

The news media's relationships with the federal government are diverse. The Fourth Estate reports what the government says, finds out whether it's true and helps determine whether their policy will work through their research which includes various interviews with experts on a particular topic. Reporters cover all government agencies, all policy issues, items of current interest and all major changes in government. The news media covering the federal beat are usually aware of the external pressures on them due to their effect on many decisions. This awareness is important in communicating more complete and accurate

stories to the American public.2

There are two communication theories which become applicable when discussing the media and federal policymaking: agenda-setting and gatekeeping. Agenda-setting, a term coined by McCombs and Shaw in 1972, is one theory that has been tested to show that the media not only determine the general public's agenda but also the agendas of government policy makers and special interest leaders, and subsequently influence public policy.3

A prime example of agenda-setting was the 51 percent pay raise intended for our nation's top executive, congressional and judicial personnel in January 1989. An independent study showed that this pay raise would provide for a better federal government by attracting the cream of the executive crop to the legislature. If not acted upon by the executive and congressional branches, this pay raise would have automatically taken effect. The news media across the country kept this item on their docket every day; the press located this 'headline' relatively close to the budget deficit story while the broadcasters usually spoke of the two (pay raise and budget problems) in the same breath. Thousands of affected Americans voiced their negative opinion about the pay raise to their elected officials. The federal lawmakers responded by voting down the pay hike, bowing to the will of the American public and the power of the national news media.

Even among the nation's media, certain news organizations rise above the others when it comes to setting the daily agenda. According to the Los Angeles Times media writer David Shaw, Eastern newspapers, magazines and broadcast networks "shape, drive and sometimes inevitably

distort" the news. He added that:

> "A story on Page One of the New York Times almost automatically ensures further attention from other media...For many media executives, everywhere, Page One of the Times is the barometer of what's truly important in the world."4

Gatekeeping is the function of the media to select or filter certain information for public examination.5 In the example regarding the pay raise, the news media selected an item of national interest and brought it to the forefront; the press splashed it across their front pages while newscasters expounded on the details for three to five of their 30 to 60 minutes of air time. Accidents, AIDS, defense, drugs, the environment and terrorism received less print or were not mentioned in the daily discourse. The editors/gatekeepers filtered the most newsworthy stories to the public.

The U.S. government also has a means to tell the people how it is governing. Through public affairs or press offices, the government provides the news media with one-stop service centers at each federal agency.6 From the numerous public affairs offices, those at the Pentagon and State Department, the White House press secretaries and the Food and Drug Administration information offices, federal communications flow in the form of press releases, news clips, speech files and background material packets.

The government public affairs officers give briefings and react to crises in addition to their routine activities: informing themselves and their colleagues, preparing material for the news media, staging events, and responding to reporters' inquiries.7 These public affairs personnel are also the government's gatekeepers and agenda-setters.

One example of governmental agenda-setting was the public unveiling of the Air Force's $500 billion Stealth bomber in late November 1988. Time Magazine called this staged event "a coming-out party (which) was both a public relations move and a pre-emptive strike against defense-budget cutters in Congress."[8]

When Larry Speakes or Marlin Fitzwater presided over a White House press briefing, they were setting agenda in providing a Presidential statement or response which was of national interest and likely to result in the form of a news media story. When National Security Council staffer Howard Teicher spoke to a Wall Street Journal reporter before the August 25, 1986 story that said "the U.S. and Libya are on a collision course again," he painted a picture of impending U.S. military action against Mu'ammar Qadhafi; and his information leak also set international agenda.[9]

Press briefings and news leaks are at the opposite ends of the information spectrum yet both are a means to an end; through them, items may appear on the media's docket, depending on their newsworthiness. These public affairs officers' tools are also a means of force-feeding the Fourth Estate with selective information. Governmental gatekeeping also evolves from the various federal agencies.

On October 12, 1988, Charles Z. Wick, director of the U.S. Information Agency, announced the establishment of an anti-disinformation system between the United States and the Soviet Union.[10] His report of this "early warning" plan to prevent the spread of Moscow-inspired disinformation worldwide, came after a luncheon speech at the National Press Club, two weeks after this arrangement was agreed on at

U.S.-Soviet negotiations in Moscow. The delay in this announcement was part of the Agency's news selection or news management process.

The ultimate in governmental gatekeeping can be found in the Department of Defense: the Pentagon news media pool. Born out of the military's attempted press blackout of the 1983 Grenada invasion, a selected number of American journalists are deployed with various branches of the armed forces to cover newsworthy events. These selected reporters share their information with various news organizations so as to provide equal media coverage. The news media pool was established to permit reporters the opportunity to deploy with military units in wartime or crisis situations. In this scenario, the military commanders decide when to activate the pool thus becoming the gatekeepers of critical Defense Department news items.

Despite yielding mixed reviews, the media pools are apparently working out and are better received than press blackouts. Pentagon News Media Pool No. 18 provided this report following their 1987 deployment to the Persian Gulf:

> "Pools have been able to cover a number of newsworthy events simply because they happened to be aboard warships at the right times. Some of these events had the potential to be even bigger stories. Without the presence of the pools, none could have been reported in such detail, and some probably would not have surfaced at all."11

The news media play an important role in federal policymaking. They are the government's watchdog, always asking the who, what, when, where, why and how--to provide objective reporting. When covering the government, journalists should always be persistent, careful, fair, knowledgeable of the agencies' process, and accurate.12 Some media watchers contend that there is an adversary relationship between the

media and agencies of the federal government; others believe that the media are simply carrying out their duties as concerned observers, knowledgeable critics, helpful ombudsmen or vehicles for open debate of public issues.13 The New York Times' Anthony Lewis expanded on this when talking about coverage of the White House:

> "Journalists have an obligation to the truth and must 'make sense of things for the reader or viewer' rather than repeat distortions, propaganda or lies."14

The American public, the media and the government would be ill-served by disinformation, deceit and lies. A democracy survives on truth, openness and a free-flow of information; a balanced and accurate account of news about the government is essential. In the 1971 Supreme Court case of the New York Times v. the United States, Justice Hugo Black expressed his opinion on the role of the press:

> "...In the First Amendment the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The government's power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure the government. The press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people..."15

The spread of disinformation violates the intent of our Founding Fathers as interpreted from the First Amendment. Another assumption about disinformation in a Western society could be that if a democratic government puts forth disinformation and this false information is uncovered, the government loses credibility, it is embarrassed, and it subjects itself to greater scrutiny. In the U.S. government, an already-slow bureaucratic process would be bogged down even more due to

congressional investigations of the wrong doing.

Further study on the effects of the media on the political affect of the public shows injurious results. Communication research author, Alexis S. Tan, predicts that "exposure to negatively reinforcing material will lead to 'political malaise,' or to distrust, political cynicism, and erosion of support."16 The bottom line is that the nation could suffer from the report of intended deception alone.

A more radical view on the relationship of the news media and the government can be seen in this passage by Michael Parenti. He believes that the media are not really functioning properly to the extent of possibly being too manipulative in their own right:

> "(The press) tells us what to make of things; it lends credibility to the official message by providing 'expert' testimony, judicious summations, half-truths and outright fabrications, some of which go beyond even what political leaders are claiming. The press looks the other way when embarrassing truths threaten to surface; it directs our attention back to the invented reality; it commits blatant omissions and maintains a stony silence about many urgent things. The press fleshes out the Big Lie, bringing it to life with alarming images and on-the-spot 'eyewitness reports.' If the news media do not always succeed perfectly in manipulating the public, it is not for want of trying."17

The other side of the coin appears in a discussion of disinformation by Lyn Nofziger, a former press secretary to President Reagan. Nofziger claims that the government is not the only source of disinformation; the media are also to blame. He cites the Gulf of Tonkin Incident and the Tet offensive during the Vietnam conflict as examples of media disinformation:

> "The failure of the media to cover some things or the failure of the media to give particular weight to some things as compared to others, (is disinformation)...Sometimes people give you bad information by accident. Once your government lies to you and gets caught; once a member of the government lies to you and gets caught, then their credibility is gone. And the one thing the American people have the right to expect is that their government is credible."18

Nofziger suggests why the public, the press and the government might be ill-served by disinformation and provides the impetus for further investigation into the subject. The following chapter provides an overview, a definition of terms, and specific examples to better illustrate the meaning of disinformation.

CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Stephen Hess, The Government/Press Connection, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1984), p. 40.

[2]Henry H. Schulte, Reporting Public Affairs, (New York: MacMillian Publishing Co., Inc., 1981), p. 110.

[3]Fay Lomax Cook, et. al., "Media and Agenda-Setting: Effects on the Public, Interest Group Leaders, Policy Makers, and Policy," Public Opinion Quarterly, (Vol. 47, 1983), pp. 16-34.

[4]M.L. Stein, "Who Sets The News Agenda?," Editor and Publisher, (31 December 1988), p. 7.

[5]Paul Hirsch, "Occupational, Organizational and Institutional Models in Mass Media Research: Toward an Integrated Framework," in Paul M. Hirsch, Peter V. Miller and F. Gerald Kline, eds., Strategies for Communication Research, (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1977), p. 22.

[6]Hess, The Government/Press Connection, p. 114.

[7]Ibid., p. 38.

[8]Jacob V. Lamar, "Will This Bird Fly?," Time, (5 December 1988), p. 20.

[9]Bob Woodward, "State Dept. Plan Urged Libya Coup," Washington Post, (5 October 1986), p. A20.

[10]Bill Gertz, "U.S., Moscow Agree To Snuff Disinformation," Washington Times, (13 October 1988), p. 3.

[11]Richard Pyle, "Sometimes the Pool Works," Washington Journalism Review, (July/August 1988), p. 15.

[12]Schulte, Reporting Public Affairs, p. vii.

[13]Ibid., p. 398.

[14]George Garneau, "Docile White House Reporting Is Back," Editor and Publisher, (17 December 1988), p. 16.

[15]Donald M. Gillmor and Jerome A. Barron, Mass Communication Law, (New York: West Publishing Company, 1984), p. 107.

[16]Alexis S. Tan, Mass Communication Theories and Research, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1985) p. 325.

[17]Michael Parenti, Inventing Reality, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 148.

[18]Personal interview with Lyn Nofziger, former press secretary to President Reagan, political consultant, Columbia, S.C., 23 March 1987. Direct quotes by Nofziger throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

CHAPTER III

DISINFORMATION

The background of disinformation must be developed to fully grasp the recent applications. This chapter will briefly trace the evolution of disinformation, describe Soviet Active Measures, provide a definition of terms, and discuss military deception at operational and strategic levels.

Disinformation, a translation of the Russian word dezinformatsia, is an ancient technique of deception comprising various ways of disseminating false or misleading information to discredit or undermine adversary governments, individuals or institutions.[1] Given institutional status in 1959, disinformation has long been a principal weapon of psychological warfare practiced by the Soviet Union. In that year, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union established within the KGB (the State Security Committee) a special unit called the Department For Active Measures or simply Department D, which specialized in black propaganda and disinformation.[2] The origin of Soviet disinformation evolved from Lenin and the Revolution of 1917. In his booklet, What Is To Be Done? Lenin professed the importance of propaganda, agitation and political deception as integral elements of Communist Party strategy.[3]

Some of the earliest rules of disinformation were written by the Chinese strategist and philosopher, Sun Tzu, in his work The Art of War. His knowledge and insight about war and politics were depicted in his assertion that:

> "...the highest art of all consists in overcoming the enemy's resistance without resorting to the battlefield. Only on the battlefield is the direct method of warfare necessary, but only the indirect method can bring true and lasting victory. Subvert all that is good in the enemy's country! Embroil the members of the ruling classes in nefarious undertakings; employ any other means to undermine their position and their standing; expose them to public shame in the eyes of their fellows! Use the services of the lowest and most loathsome of men! Use every means to disrupt the work of government! Spread discord and dissension among the citizens of the enemy's country! Set the young against the old! Spare no means to destroy the equipment, supplies and discipline of the enemy's troops! Debase the old customs and the gods! Be generous with promises and gifts to purchase information and accomplices! Deploy your spies wherever you can!"4

It is beyond the scope of this study to track disinformation in terms of deception and propaganda prior to the 1960s but to better understand disinformation, these terms must be defined and examples (Soviet and American) given. Prior to the 1960s in the Soviet Union, disinformation was placed under the category of "active measures" and was the responsibility of the KGB. The Soviets use the term "active measures" to describe overt and covert techniques for influencing events and behavior in, and the actions of, foreign societies.5 In addition to disinformation, they include propaganda, forgeries, rumors, use of front organizations, influence agents, exploitation of foreign academic, economic, or scientific elites, clandestine broadcasting, paramilitary operations and deception, support of guerrilla groups, and such terrorists activities as kidnapping and assassinations.6 (The Soviet Organizational Structure for Active Measures is listed as Appendix A.)

"Active measures" are used to promote Soviet foreign policy goals and to undercut the position of Soviet opponents. One such example of "active measures" with current repercussions is cited in the October 1983 Department of State Bulletin:

> ...the principal target of Soviet active measures continues to be the NATO decision to deploy intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Western Europe.7

One example listed in this bulletin regarding INF is the June 1983 triennial gathering of the major Soviet front group, the World Peace Council, meeting in Prague and making opposition to INF deployment its main target.8 (See Appendix C, Major Soviet-backed International Front Groups.)

More comprehensive examples of active measures are found in Shultz and Godson's Desinformatsia and Ladislav Bittman's The KGB and Soviet Disinformation. In the former work, the terms overt and covert propaganda and disinformation are used extensively. To better distinguish among terms, the Conference on Contemporary Soviet Propaganda and Disinformation sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency in 985, developed the following working definitions of propaganda and disinformation:

> PROPAGANDA is the dissemination of information--facts, arguments, rumors, half-truths, or lies--to influence public opinion. As a systematic effort to persuade, it is an act of advocacy in mass communications, involving the making of deliberately one-sided statements to a mass audience. In this, it is not necessarily deceptive...

DISINFORMATION is a broad concept that includes any government-sponsored communication in which deliberately misleading information is passed to targeted individuals, groups, or governments with the purpose of influencing foreign elite or public opinion. Disinformation is used by the Soviet Union to deceive target audiences about Soviet intentions and capabilities and to manipulate foreign perceptions of reality in ways advantageous to Soviet interests. It can take the form of overt propaganda, as well as such things as forgeries, rumors, and covert placements of unattributed articles in foreign media. Instruments used in disinformation operations include both open media and clandestine radios, agents of influence, international front organizations, and espionage agents who have been doubled.9

Examples of the different techniques of active measures will be useful in the identification of disinformation and how the techniques at times become interwoven objectives in the accomplishment of a Soviet goal.

In the arena of propaganda, the Soviet Union's massive propaganda machine includes its own media such as TASS, Pravda, Novosti and Radio Moscow. Use of external media is a preferred method which adds to Soviet credibility. Examples of the use of both internal and external media follow:

*Radio Moscow broadcasts in 81 languages for a total of 2,175 hours per week. In English alone, Radio Moscow World Service transmits 24 hours a day.

*Time, the weekly U.S. news magazine, devotes the better part of one issue (September 9, 1985) to an interview with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The interview, translated and published in Pravda (September 2, 1985), results in worldwide publicity. Subsequently, the three major U.S. television networks also seek to arrange interviews with the Soviet leader.10

John Barron, a noted author and scholar on the topic of the KGB,

provided an abstract of Soviet forgery:

"In 1975, the KGB fabricated a U.S. Army manual bearing the forged signature of General William Westmoreland. It contained two sinister themes: wherever U.S. military forces or advisors are stationed, they are to interfere in the internal political affairs of the host country to ensure anti-Communist and anti-leftist policies and, in extreme cases, are to manipulate and incite ultra-left groups to violence so as to provoke the host government into militant anti-Communist actions.[11]

Relying on the populace to spread rumors which will eventually gain national media attention in other countries, the KGB will stoop to new lows:

"TASS, the Soviet news agency, reported the death of 13-year-old Samantha Smith, the girl from Maine who visited the Soviet Union in 1983, in so intricate a manner that rumors were rife in Moscow...that Samantha's death was engineered by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.[12]

A classic example of an agent of influence was brought out by former KGB agent Stanislav Levchenko during Congressional Hearings before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives in July 1982:

"The KGB used Danish journalist Arne Herlov Petersen for more than ten years in publishing anti-NATO disinformation, designing anti-American forgeries, and conveying funds to various peace activities. He was mainly used for manipulating Danish public opinion through various articles, pamphlets, and letters to editors rather than obtaining secret information. One example of his work was the pamphlet entitled "Cold

Warriors," which attacked Western politicians such as Margaret Thatcher, Henry Jackson, Barry Goldwater and NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns.13

Examples of exploitation of foreign academic, economic, or scientific elites were reported in 1976 by the Senate Intelligence Committee. It learned that one quarter of the Soviet students who had come to the United States between 1965 and 1975 were intelligence officers or agents.14 One instance was told to the Committee in the spring of 1982:

*A former Soviet engineer testified before Senate investigators that the KGB sends scientists, students, and trade officials to the United States with detailed "shopping lists" of sensitive equipment needed and wanted by Moscow. Priority assignments included lasers, guidance technology for missiles, aircraft technology, computer equipment and design, and submarine data.15

Along the lines of clandestine broadcasting, the Soviet Union's major "unofficial" electronic medium is Radio Peace and Progress. Located within the Soviet Union, this station claims that it is not a government outlet and it seeks to to give the impression that it represents non-Soviet groups.16 The National Voice of Iran is a similarly designed station and its role came into focus during the 1979 Iranian Hostage Crisis:

*On November 4, 1979, the station hailed "the struggling young people" who had taken over the U.S. embassy as a "decisive response to the overt and covert conspiracies of U.S. imperialism and the U.S. government's hostile act of settling the deposed Shah in the United States." When U.S. representatives protested this activity in Moscow in

mid-month, the National Voice of Iran became more cautious.17

Providing overt or clandestine aid to leftist guerrilla groups gives the Soviets the magic key to future manipulation of a Third World country at war.18 One example of this support can be found in Angola where in 1981, the U.S. government estimated that there were at least 1,000 Soviet advisors:

*Evidence of this support was confirmed in 1981 when the South African army captured Sergeant Major Petretsov, a Soviet advisor who was participating in the war against the regime in Namibia. The Soviet Union remained silent about charges of intervention but finally in 1982, they agreed for a prisoner exchange of Petretsov for several West European agents that they held.19

Terrorism is not an activity closely associated with "active measures" yet with the KGB, the 'end does justify the means.' This passage from Ladislav Bittman's book best explains the relationship between terrorism and "active measures:"

> Official Soviet propaganda does not provide an appropriate key for examining Soviet involvement in international terrorism. Although the Soviet press propagates the Marxist-Leninist view that terrorism is anarchistic, pointlessly destructive, and counterproductive, the KGB considers it an infectious, debilitating disease that weakens the body of Soviet opponents and helps to achieve the long-term goal of disintegrating the Western establishment. In considering the phenomenon of international terrorism and its connections to Eastern Europe, many Western analysts mistakenly separate terrorism from other forms of Soviet "active measures." The KGB's involvement is covered by several protective layers of tight security rules and the so-called international proletarian help. Even the members of terrorist organizations are unaware of their assigned role in Soviet plans.20

Soviet disinformation and propaganda go hand-in-hand in accomplishing their goals to demoralize, destabilize, and to evoke both

fear and guilt in Western societies. "Active measures" encompasses the above-listed techniques and further accounts can be found in the works of Barron, Bittman, de Borchgrave, Ebon, and Shultz and Godson. KGB defector Stanislav Levchenko best sums up the policy-enhancing role of Soviet "active measures,"

> ...the trick is to make people support Soviet policy unwittingly by convincing them they are supporting something else...therefore, by every conceivable means, the KGB plans and coordinates campaigns to persuade (and deceive) the public... That's the art of "active measures," a sort of made-in-Moscow black magic. It is tragic to see how well it works.21

Disinformation is closely related to one other topic; that is deception. In this instance, military deception is most relevant in terms of supporting Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet Union plays a sophisticated game of hide-and-seek with the United States. Complex and delicate electronic instruments, satellites, aircraft and ships, underwater microphones, radar equipment, and numerous agents and double agents are all mixed for the purpose of mutual surveillance.22 Mutual surveillance is required to determine if the two super powers are conducting business within the ground rules of bluffing without launching a major attack. Every successful military operation involves an element of deception and surprise, and effective defense against deception demands a reliable intelligence warning system.23

The Central Intelligence Agency and other U.S. intelligence agencies have been sparring with the KGB and the GRU (the Soviet military intelligence counterpart) for years. Yet prior to 1978, the U.S. intelligence agencies had totally underestimated the Soviet Union's military strength. The Soviet hardware buildup to include both nuclear

and conventional forces was at an alarming level but the U.S. intelligence community failed to detect it. A New York Times article quoting a Business Week report in February 1977, best sums up the U.S. shortcoming,

> "...Americans were truly surprised in May 1972 when they intercepted,with the help of their satellite, conversations between Leonid Brezhnev, Andrei Gromyko, and Soviet missile designers in a limousine on their way to a Moscow conference. Brezhnev talked about a "main missile" -- the SS-19--that had never before been mentioned in SALT negotiations. Not until some years later (in 1978) did American intelligence analysts conclude that their estimates of Soviet military strength had been shockingly inaccurate."24

The Soviet military deception 'program' was running smoothly. Military deception is an integral part of every nation's military strategy, but the Soviets have mastered it to a degree unsurpassed in modern history.25

One case of strategic deception with current applications is the Soviet operation during the first round of strategic arms discussions (SALT I) involving intercontinental ballistic missiles in May 1972. When President Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev completed negotiations to ban mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles, they verbally agreed that their countries would not build land-based mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles, but Brezhnev refused to sign the agreement.26 The Soviets had covertly stockpiled almost 100 mobile SS-16 intermediate range nuclear missiles which could easily have been upgraded to an intercontinental status. Even the state-of-the-art KH-11 surveillance satellite used by U.S. intelligence analysts did not pick up the Soviet mobile launchers.27 Brezhnev's verbal agreement fits the working definition of disinformation detailed previously in this chapter.

The Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty that was signed on December 8, 1987 is one means that the United States hopes to cut through Soviet deception by conducting on-site inspections and continuous portal monitoring. This is a major breakthrough in countering Soviet deception as the INF Treaty establishes unprecedented on-site inspection rights to assist in verification and strengthens the United States' ability to monitor Soviet compliance.28

Examples of military deception at an operational level could be found by examining most large-scale battles and allied invasions during World War II. Operational deception could be defined as selling the enemy a false picture of one's own war plans, while combining the elements of plausibility, security and coordination.29 Many successful deception plans were supported by additional layers of military illusion. A more recent example of this technique was the Israeli preparations for the Six Day War of 1967.

Following the Egyptian blockade of the Tiran Straits, Israeli war planners decided to gain the advantage by making a preemptive strike against Egypt. Less than 36 hours before the attack, Israeli media were given statements by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan noting that it was too late for spontaneous military reaction to the blockade and that the government's course of diplomatic action must be given a chance.30 Many Israeli soldiers were also given weekend leave and many foreign journalists then decided to depart the country.

The Israeli operational deception plan had four tactical elements: a naval ruse to draw most of the Egyptian Navy to the Red Sea; an army ploy to simulate a large armor buildup; an armored feint by Maj. Gen.

Ariel Sharon involving dummy tanks; and an air force deception to support the naval ruse intending to draw the Egyptians away from their northern air bases by threatening a major air strike from the south.31

This plan plus a strategic deception designed to fool the United Nations in believing that the Egyptians had committed the act of war first, permitted the Israelis to accomplish their goals. Effective planning and coordination were key to this strategy, including the overall deception of the international media not to mention the Israeli populace. Disinformation played an integral role in the success of the war plan. As seen here, the Soviet Union is not the only proponency of disinformation.

The Soviet Union, though, is the greatest practitioner of disinformation and its initiatives will be examined in the following chapter. Its Warsaw Pact allies soon caught on quickly, and recently the United States began to practice disinformation, as it will be scrutinized in Chapter V. Though skilled in military deception during time of war, the United States and its western allies must carefully decide if disinformation is a desired course of action to combat communism or terrorism, especially within the realm of a democracy.

In any event, the U.S. government, especially the executive branch, must carefully weigh the decision to initiate any such disinformation program. With instant communications readily available, the desired target audience may not be the only faction to be misled. The U.S. government, the American public and especially the western news media must be on constant guard to discern what is the truth and what is a lie. With the knowledge that one super power willingly employs

disinformation to promote its foreign policy goals (and most of the Soviet Union's satellite countries are equally versed in "active measures"), more emphasis needs to be given to this topic.

CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Chapman Pincher, The Secret Offensive (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 146.

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[20]Ibid., pp. 173-174.

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[22]Bittman, The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View, p. 130.

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CHAPTER IV

ACTIVE MEASURES: SOVIET INITIATIVES

Disinformation has been central to Soviet strategy for defeating the West since 1968 when the newly-appointed KGB chief, General Yuri Andropov, elevated the Disinformation Department of the KGB to the status of an independent Directorate, known as Directorate A.[1] This chapter identifies numerous Soviet initiatives as accounts of their disinformation programs are recalled from Congressional hearings in the early 1980s.

A new chapter in Soviet disinformation was revealed when Arnaud de Borchgrave, the current editor-in-chief of the Washington Times, testified before the newly-created Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism on April 24, 1981. De Borchgrave, a former Newsweek correspondent and co-author of a political novel, The Spike, called attention to irrefutable proof that the Soviet Union was playing "a covert role in promoting the antinuclear lobby" through a front organization known as Mobilization for Survival.[2]

De Borchgrave, Dr. Michael Ledeen, a foreign-policy analyst and editor, and William E. Colby, a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, all testified that the KGB routinely manipulated

the Western media through disinformation and "sabotage of Western intelligence services through press exposure."3 This testimony eventually paved the way for the uncovering of the massive Soviet disinformation campaign (back in 1977-78) directed against NATO's military arsenal and in particular, the United States' neutron bomb.

Initial light was shed in the 'Soviet Covert Action' Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Oversight of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in February 1980; the plan was to depict the Soviet military buildup as defensive and NATO's growth as aggressive.4 The neutron bomb was presented as a dreadful addition to the U.S. nuclear arsenal and a symbol of American imperialism. Through the Soviet media, front organizations, and secret journalistic channels in the West, the neutron bomb was "a fearsome weapon of war" yet Soviet missiles were "a shield for peace."5 When President Carter decided to delay production and deployment of the neutron bomb in 1978, the Soviet Union's investment of a CIA-estimated $100 million in campaign costs seemed to pay off.6

On July 13, 1982, the House of Representatives' Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence met to discuss Soviet Active Measures. Congressman Bill Young of Florida, a committee member, requested these hearings "to give a better understanding of how hostile intelligence services operate."7 The Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and former KGB major, Stanislav Levchenko, all testified on the goals, strategies and techniques of the Soviet Union's attempts and successes to deceive and disinform the United States.

In the summer and fall of 1981, the New York Times printed a number

of articles on Soviet disinformation. One article by Harry Rositzke, a former CIA officer, told of the KGB's attempt "to provide the third world with hard 'evidence' of America's hostile intentions."8 In addition to disinformation through the foreign press, the KGB planted forgeries of CIA publications which outlined plans to undermine several Latin American countries, and plotted assassinations against the Egyptian and Indonesian presidents.

The Times' William Safire followed with an essay on the FBI as a target of Soviet disinformation. His article described an assumed double agent; "a Russian at the U.N. who was supposedly passing secrets on to the F.B.I." but later turned out to be a triple agent who even deceived the CIA.9

On October 10, Bernard Gwertzman cited a State Department report accusing the Soviet Union of a disinformation campaign "to mislead foreign governments, media and public opinion."10 The State Department document said the 'disinformation campaign' spread false rumors that the U.S. supported the efforts to seize the Grand Mosque of Mecca in November 1979, and that the U.S. was also behind the plane crash that killed Panamanian leader General Omar Torrijos Herrera in August 1981.

One final article with Congressional undertones, was the announcement of 'Project Truth;' a U.S. International Communication Agency program designed "to provide a fast-reply service to posts abroad when rumors or news reports about American activity thought to be untrue begin to circulate."11 The story in this article was not only the examples of Soviet disinformation but the herald of the Agency's transcripts which Congressional leaders and State Department officials

sought to be made public despite Agency protests.

This last article also cited House Minority Leader Robert H. Michel's actions "under a Congressional exemption from the law" putting excerpts from the Communication Agency's first publication into the Congressional Record on October 26 and 27.12 This could be interpreted as another Congressional attempt to publicize the hidden dangers of Soviet disinformation. The 'Soviet Covert Action' Hearings were just the tip of the iceberg, and Congressman Young wanted to expose the "growing evidence of Soviet 'active measures' throughout the world."13

The Active Measures hearings were an example of CIA and FBI cooperation with a congressional committee, and both agencies provided classified studies on Soviet actions as evidence. Testifying before the committee were the CIA's deputy director of central intelligence, John McMahon, the deputy director for operations, John Stein, and two of his operations directorate, Martin C. Portman and James Freilach.14 Edward J O'Malley of the FBI testified on July 14 as did defector Stanislav Levchenko, a former KGB agent stationed in Japan.15

The CIA's McMahon explained the studies that he presented to the select committee; one provided a detailed examination of Soviet active measures and the other provided an updated account of various specific Soviet activities.16 He initially discussed the unique role of active measures in the Soviet foreign policy, the structure of their policy-making system, and the aims of their policy and its focus on the U.S. as the primary target.

McMahon described active measures as a 'supplemental instrument' to conduct Soviet foreign policy in addition to the more conventional

means: diplomatic, military and economic. He cited a CIA estimate that the KGB received approximately $3 to $4 billion annually to finance their on-going programs.17 Another aspect of active measures that McMahon pointed out as the most important were the political influence operations. He said that these influence operations have a "common aim: To insinuate Soviet policy views into foreign governmental, journalistic, business, labor, academic, and artistic opinion in a nonattributable fashion."18

The deputy director also explained that the Western and Third World governments did not really understand Soviet active measures due to sporadic encounters. McMahon said as a result, "the Soviets have been able to go about their large scale active measures efforts quite freely, to the detriment of U.S. foreign policy interests abroad."19 In addition, due to the Soviet Union's highly centralized structure, the KGB could utilize all elements of society to promote their efforts: the Communist party, the government, businesses, individuals, and the military in coordination with the military intelligence, the GRU.

McMahon pointed out that active measures tactics were flexible enough to adjust to changes in the international arena but that the basic techniques and strategies would remain the same. He also provided some CIA estimates on future trends in the use of Soviet active measures:

> "Greater attention to security, disarmament and peace issues; increased objectivity and reasonableness in the propaganda elements of active measures, and a tactical deemphasis of Communist ideology; greater operational sophistication in the manipulation of influence assets and in the production and use of documentary

> forgeries; greater willingness to work with religious groups and non-Communist political parties, as well as greater use of single-issue and ad hoc front groups instead of the older, larger well-known Communist front organizations; continued use of allies, proxies and surrogates such as Cuba; continued opposition to Western instruments of social and economic influence in the Third World, and greater advocacy of the creation of new international institutions and organizations such as a Third World press service that promote Soviet influence."20

McMahon stated that the CIA had a good understanding of Soviet active measures and their use in foreign policy development. The CIA also had plenty of insight by their estimate of "a tactical deemphasis of Communist ideology" as Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's new policies of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' -- openness and restructuring or reforming, respectively -- shifted from the old party line. His shift from Stalinism to Leninism was also an abrupt change. Gorbachev has also shown a willingness to listen to Soviet Jews, in addition to now describing the Soviet Union as "one big debating society."21 The use of allies, proxies and surrogates along with Cuba, can be seen in Nicaragua, Angola and Afghanistan. The deputy director expressed confidence in the judgments of the CIA and the evidence that they compiled to support it.22 The 1982 CIA estimate was very accurate as 1988 developments have shown.

Referring to the "Trends and Developments in Soviet Active Measures" study, McMahon cited the oral and written disinformation campaigns recently undertaken by the KGB. A total of 16 examples of attempted Soviet deception were covered in the section titled "Forgeries and Other Disinformation Operations."23

The first three instances involved "CIA Map Operations" where KGB operatives purchased publicly-available, CIA-produced maps from the U.S.

Government Printing Office and used them as a basis for disinformation about U.S. foreign policy. In standard KGB fashion, disinformation was planted in an other-than Soviet newspaper, then the Soviet media would cite this 'neutral' source and the Communist apparatus would insure widespread distribution for maximum publicity.

The first case occurred on September 20, 1981 in the Austrian newspaper, Volksstimme, where a map found in a "secret service building" in West Germany detailed U.S. raids and sabotage on Austrian targets. The article was designed to stir up anti-U.S. sentiment. The second sample appeared in the Indian daily, Patriot, on November 11, 1981 and described an airlift of CIA-prepared maps into Pakistan bound for the Afghan rebels. The intent was to document allegations of U.S. support and interference in a Third World country. The Ethiopian Herald was the medium for the third instance which told of the CIA using bacteriological warfare against Cuba. This piece also expounded on additional U.S. map operations in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Argentina.

A different mode of disinformation was unveiled in mid-November 1981 as at least twelve Western Union Mailgrams were sent to U.S. and foreign journalists in the Washington, D.C. area. These mailgrams told of U.S.-Swedish cooperation in satellite reconnaissance operations to spy on Soviet submarine activity in the Baltic Sea. This account of U.S. involvement was designed to support a TASS story of aggression against the Soviet Union. This disinformation attempt was uncovered as the transmissions attributed to U.S. officials and the Swedish ambassador, were drafted in substandard English.

A fifth example of Soviet disinformation occurred on November 27,

1981 when Radio Moscow linked the U.S. government with a coup attempt in Seychelles. A public statement by Seychelles President Rene declared that there was no indication of U.S. involvement yet TASS continued to press the accusations.

Another instance of a KGB hoax was the illogical accusation that the CIA and U.S. "secret services" were tied to the kidnapping of U.S. Army Brigadier General James Dozier by the Italian Red Brigades. This story, carried in the Soviet media, was part of an on-going campaign to depict U.S. efforts to undermine the Italians' leftist opposition to NATO in the early '80s.

"Disinformation Ploys in Portuguese Newspapers" was a seventh example of a Soviet-backed deception which started in September 1981. Articles appearing in the Portugal Hoje described U.S. efforts to back a coup attempt on the Marxist government in Angola. A pro-Communist paper, Diario De Lisboa, reported that U.S. military advisors were assisting the Angolan opposition group, UNITA, and that Secretary of State Alexander Haig had offered additional military assistance when he met with UNITA's leader, Jonas Savimbi, in Washington. This KGB disinformation campaign tried to disrupt U.S.-Angolan negotiations for a non-violent resolution of the Namibian situation.

In 1981, a disinformation campaign was aimed at a senior U.S. Foreign Service Officer, George Griffin, by the Soviet media. TASS, Literary Gazette, Izvestiya, and Moscow Radio's World Service all attacked Griffin as a CIA operative who was conducting covert operations in India and Afghanistan. This was a unique case leveled against an individual, and it was easy to refute as Griffin's travels had taken him

miles from where he was reported to be.

A ninth instance of disinformation occurred in early 1982 when TASS initiated charges that the U.S. was conducting bacteriological warfare in Lahore, Pakistan. A University of Maryland disease research facility in that country was the target of the campaign. Indian pro-Communist newspapers expanded on the theme in a KGB effort to deflect U.S. allegations of Soviet use of chemical and bacteriological weapons in Southeast Asia.

The last documented example was the large-scale Soviet disinformation campaign in Beijing. In early 1982, the Soviet media generated stories "aimed at fueling speculation regarding improvement in Sino-Soviet relations and tensions in U.S.-Chinese relations."24 The gist of the campaign was based on improved Chinese-Polish relations following the declaration of martial law in Poland in December 1981. This disinformation theme was extremely twisted as the Chinese had recently shown support for the Polish populace's resistance to Soviet pressure.

The remaining cases detailed KGB forgeries involving the NATO allies. The CIA's thorough presentation to the congressional committee also included examples of influence operations, economic activities, military operations, clandestine radio broadcasting, use of front organizations, and KGB operatives to control the foreign media. The exhaustive, day-long testimony of the CIA was even more impressive because of the number of recent instances of KGB deception that were cited.

The testimony of former KGB major, Stanislav Levchenko, served to

confirm the CIA studies and estimates of Soviet Active Measures. His previous testimony before congressional inquiries had provided a better understanding of the Soviet system for Western intelligence agencies. His defection had been so damaging to the Soviet Union that Levchenko had been tried in absentia in August 1981 and was sentenced to death.25 He described the KGB operations in Japan, and he filled in the minute holes left open during the CIA session.

The FBI's Assistant Director for Intelligence, Edward J. O'Malley, provided testimony on the Soviet active measures in the United States. He furnished a report with several exhibits, cited specific examples within the U.S., and summarized the FBI's investigation and assessment of Soviet active measures.26 Following the CIA lead, O'Malley analyzed the concept of active measures, delineated the KGB apparatus, and described the strategies and techniques.

In his prepared statement, O'Malley presented disinformation as an active measures technique. He could only provide examples of disinformation abroad and then transitioned into the manipulation of the foreign media. O'Malley listed the previously-mentioned example of U.S. "mailgram" disinformation under the category of forgery. His most detailed section was devoted to political influence operations and he tied in Soviet front organizations existing in the U.S.

O'Malley summarized his account by describing the FBI's responsibility to combat espionage and other clandestine intelligence activities by foreign governments. He put active measures in the latter category. The FBI's assessment followed:

"...the Soviet leadership continues to use and fund such (active measures) operations on a large scale suggests a positive assessment of their value. An examination of the available information indicates that Soviet active measures are conducted on a worldwide scale, are well integrated with other Soviet foreign policy actions, and appear frequently to be effective.

...They often fall in the gray area between overt efforts to influence and covert action operations. Soviet active measures attempt to exploit or manipulate individuals, organizations, or movements whose policies coincide with the goals or objectives of Soviet foreign policy.

...we do not see Soviet active measures in the United States as having a significant impact on U.S. decisionmakers.... The American media is sophisticated, and generally recognizes Soviet influence attempts. In addition, Soviet active measures operations are often transparent and sometimes clumsily implemented. The FBI has uncovered no evidence that suggests American policymakers have been induced to adopt policies against this country's interests through KGB influence operations in the United States."27

The FBI's testimony coincided with the CIA assessment of the situation. O'Malley added that in the past, most of the KGB deception efforts were in Europe. He said the FBI could foresee increased attempts of active measures in the U.S., and that the FBI would be giving more attention and providing more resources to combat this effort. O'Malley also stressed inter-agency cooperation and closer collaboration with Congress.28

In concluding the hearings, Congressman Young warned that his colleagues should become more familiar with active measures as a means of conducting Soviet foreign policy. He was impressed with the "knowledge and understanding" of the CIA and the FBI regarding active measures.29 Young closed with a statement that expressed his confidence that the U.S. government had not yet been tarnished by disinformation:

"The FBI has uncovered no evidence that suggests American policymakers have been induced to adopt policies against this country's interests through KGB influence operations in the United States."30

Young's comments were not that convincing to many lawmakers. The Department of Defense was still smarting from the political decision to scrap the neutron bomb.

CHAPTER NOTES

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[4]"Soviet Covert Actions -- The Forgery Offensive," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Oversight of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House of Representatives, 96th Congress, (6, 19 February 1980), pp. 70-71.

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[11]Barbara Crossette, "U.S. Starts 'Project Truth' in Bid to Counter Soviet," New York Times, (4 November 1981), p. A7.

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[14]Ibid., p. 3.

[15]Ibid., p. 198.

[16]Ibid., p. 4.

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[24]Ibid., p. 55.

[25]Ibid., p. 3.

[26]Ibid., p. 219.

[27]Ibid., pp. 226-227.

[28]Ibid., p. 219.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

CHAPTER V

ACTIVE MEASURES: U.S. INITIATIVES

> "Disinformation...everybody seems to have forgotten that the Soviets invented only the word, not the practice, which is despicable. It does take on a kind of respectability in wartime because news, true or false, is viewed by the military as another weapon to destroy the enemy by confusing them. In an open society such as ours, even in an all-out war, there is danger of confusing your friends more than your enemies."[1]

This statement by Joseph Laitin, the Washington Post's ombudsman, in his November 9, 1986 column, helped illustrate a point of view regarding the dangers of deceiving the American public. Referring back to this study's introduction, journalists such as George Wilson and Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta, raised the issue of U.S.-generated disinformation in the early 1980s.[2] The Soviet Union did not have a monopoly on 'dezinformatsia.' Two examples of U.S. initiatives in the disinformation arena are examined in this chapter. The first study peruses the Libyan campaign where U.S. disinformation was finally spotlighted by the media. The second example is not as obtrusive as the first, yet the evolution of the B-1 Bomber fits into the category of an active measure.

1. A CASE STUDY OF THE LIBYAN DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

The exposure of the U.S. government's disinformation campaign directed against Libya in the summer of 1986 alarmed the American media. The general consensus among media editors was that the Reagan Administration had been caught blatantly lying to the public about Mu'ammar Qadhafi's involvement in international terrorism and possible U.S. retaliation.3 When Bob Woodward of the Washington Post disclosed an administration scheme to undermine the Libyan leader through the U.S. news media, many journalists believed that this use of disinformation and strategic deception was morally wrong.4 Was it ethical and legitimate to fight terrorism by using disinformation as a tool against terrorist organizations? Was the abuse of the U.S. news media the only misdeed? Using newspaper sources and selected interviews, this deception campaign has been pieced together here, from the initial Libyan terrorist activities to the abrupt conclusion brought about by the Iran-Contra situation.

To better understand the rationale of the Libyan disinformation campaign, one must first determine how the plan was developed, what the goal of this plan was, and what methods were to be taken to implement this plan. Although originally formulated with more drastic measures, the Administration developed this plan of deception to deter Libyan-sponsored terrorism and bring about a change of leadership in Libya.5 For best effects, the plan was to be initiated early enough to disrupt Qadhafi's commemoration of the 17th anniversary of his revolution on September 1, 1986. A sequenced chain of "'real and illusory events'

stage-managed to mislead the news media --and thus Qadhafi-- on U.S. plans" was proposed in the scheme.6

Libya's involvement in terrorist activities that affected the Reagan Administration dates back to 1980. Six documented incidents throughout Europe and even one Libya-related attack in the United States set the agenda for the administrations' policy of containment of Qadhafi (see Appendix D - Libya's Trail of Terror and U.S. Responses: April - October 1980). Libya was the first country against which the Reagan Administration used military force: on August 19, 1981, U.S. Navy fighters shot down two Libyan jets that had challenged their right to fly over the Gulf of Sidra.7 A continuous duel between the United States and Libya simmered over the years when it finally reached a boiling point in early 1986.

Prior to this year, Libya-sponsored terrorism flourished. Terrorist-training camps established by Qadhafi instructed Palestine Liberation Organization factions and others in the techniques of hijacking, armed assault and surveillance. Qadhafi, in a January 15, 1986 speech in Tripoli, confirmed his support by pledging to train and arm terrorists to harass Israel and the United States.8 Secretary of State George P. Shultz said that Qadhafi was his own 'smoking gun' and that his speech substantiated the U.S. charges that Libya had been training terrorists for years.9

The administration also called attention to the "People's Bureaus;" the Libyan embassies worldwide which served as 'protected outposts' for Qadhafi's terrorist network.10 There were approximately 100 People's Bureaus including 27 in Europe and eight in Latin America. Libyan abuse

of their embassies had surfaced on the international level only once before 1986. In April 1984 during anti-Qadhafi demonstrations in London, two gunmen in the Libyan People's Bureau opened fire on a crowd. These 'diplomats' killed an unarmed police woman who was attempting to keep the demonstrators orderly and provide security for the Libyans.11

On December 27, 1985, terrorists attacked civilians in the Rome and Vienna airports killing 19 and wounding 110. Libya and Palestine Liberation Organization factions were believed to be responsible.12 On January 7, 1986, President Reagan responded to these terrorist attacks by issuing Executive Order 12543 which prohibited trade and banned nearly all transactions with Libya by U.S. companies and individuals.13 The following day, the President also froze Libyan assets in the U.S. Reagan called upon European allies to support American economic sanctions and impose their own penalties against Libya. Qadhafi called U.S. actions "tantamount" to a declaration of war.14

In the next few weeks, the Libyan leader took advantage of the U.S. actions by attempting to portray his country as an innocent underdog. The Soviet Union issued a strong statement of support for Libya, and Qadhafi strengthened his internal position by distracting his opponents.15 Qadhafi also met with several European ambassadors to discuss trade and foreign business, in an attempt to exploit U.S.-Western European differences/non-compliance regarding economic sanctions against Libya.

Despite the U.S. sanctions which weakened the Libyan economy, Qadhafi gained additional internal backing from his national

legislature. The Libyan congress supported Qadhafi's wishes by calling for the formation of suicide squads to attack U.S. and Israeli interests worldwide, specifically targeting embassies.16

In late March 1986, the United States Navy conducted a "freedom of navigation" exercise with a carrier task force in the Mediterranean Sea north of the Gulf of Sidra. Qadhafi had drawn his imaginary "Line of Death" across the Gulf of Sidra which he proclaimed as Libyan territorial waters. The U.S. recognized the majority of this gulf as international waters. To insure freedom of the seas, the U.S. Navy initially sent aircraft to conduct reconnaissance of this area. When the Libyans fired Soviet-made SA5 missiles at the planes, U.S. fighters retaliated by attacking the missile site at Surt and two guided-missile patrol boats.17 On March 25, Navy planes attacked and sank another Libyan vessel that had fired on the aircraft. The exercise ended two days later.

(It is important to note at this point that nationally syndicated columnists Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta identified Iran as a key terrorist supporter. In their March 31 article, "Iran's Terrorism Role Underestimated" in the Washington Post, they suggested that Libya was not the largest exporter of terrorism, and that Iran's terror network might be more extensive. These columnists did not adhere to the party line of Qadhafi as the toughest terrorist on the block, and continued to push the fact that the Ayatollah Khomeini was more dangerous. This line of thought would surface later when the Iran-Contra situation evolved.)

Nine days after the U.S.-Libyan confrontation in the Gulf of Sidra, four Americans were killed and five wounded by a bomb blast on a TWA jet

en route from Rome to Athens. This incident raised the question of possible retaliation by Libya yet Qadhafi emphatically denied any role in the bombing.18

On April 5, one American soldier and a Turkish woman were killed and 155 wounded in a bomb explosion in a West Berlin disco. Senior American officials in West Berlin said there were clear indications of Libyan responsibility.19 Libya was suspected as this was the second incident since Qadhafi vowed to retaliate against American targets worldwide following the Gulf of Sidra clash.

In retaliation for Qadhafi's role in the Berlin Disco bombing, U.S. forces on April 14, conducted a joint service air attack on military targets in Libya. Qadhafi's headquarters and suspected terrorist camps around the port cities of Tripoli and Benghazi were bombed. U.S. officials contended there was irrefutable evidence that the Libyan People's Bureau in East Berlin arranged the act of terrorism which evoked this reprisal. White House spokesman Larry Speakes said the goals in attacking Libya "were to damage Qadhafi's ability to undertake terrorist acts and to show him that he cannot support terrorism without paying a heavy price."20

Qadhafi survived the bombing raid and initially went into seclusion. Libya protested the 'act of war' in the United Nations, and the U.S. raid was denounced by many Communist and Third World countries. Some NATO countries refused to back the U.S. action. The bombing raid apparently achieved the desired results, though, as Qadhafi fluctuated between a depressed state and a confused condition littered with meaningless discourses. Reports of terrorist incidents did not

markedly decrease, and the United States prepared for the terrorists' revenge. Administration officials, though, hoped that in the long run, the raid would reduce terrorist incidents. On April 19, the Washington Post reported that a Libyan foreign minister had asked the European Community to "help find a peaceful, permanent and just solution to its conflict with the U.S."21

The months following the U.S. raid on Libya saw a decline in actual terrorist incidents but the news media rhetoric on terrorism held at a constant level. European and Middle Eastern countries expelled each others diplomats with Libyan envoys doing the majority of the moving. Media coverage of the American hostages in the Middle East heightened with the release of Rev. Lawrence Jenco, a Roman Catholic priest held hostage by Shiite Moslem militants in Lebanon. His release on July 26 kept the media focused on the remaining captives, and the U.S. government's policy on 'no concessions over hostages.'22

New intelligence reports appeared in July questioning the mental stability of Qadhafi. The bizarre behavior of Qadhafi was detailed in an account to Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Central Intelligence Agency Director William Casey.23 At a meeting with Yemeni officials, Qadhafi was depicted as on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Some administration officials who desired to see Qadhafi out of office, saw this as an opportunity to exert psychological pressure on the Libyan leader.24

(Bob Woodward's detailed account of the intelligence report and the follow-on escalation of effort to oust Qadhafi, was provided in a Washington Post article dated October 5. This article supported his

October 2 exclusive story on "Gadhafi Target of Secret U.S. Deception Plan." The news media cited Woodward's article in all initial references to the Administration's deception plan.25 Woodward's latest book, VEIL: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987, has detailed interviews with former CIA Director William Casey. J. Anthony Lukas reviewed Woodward's book, and he pointed out that Casey's "cultivation of Woodward could have been part of a CIA disinformation scheme designed to mislead the press and public about the evolution of the administration's covert operations in the Middle East and Latin America...." Woodward's uncovering of the administration's disinformation campaign provided media outlets with front-page news for at least one and one half months. This disinformation story suddenly died when the Iran-Contra situation was unveiled.)26

The demise of Qadhafi was determined to be a priority among the government agencies. The State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council and to a lesser extent, the Defense Department all weighed the actions to be taken to affect the Libyan leader. One objective identified was the desire to force Qadhafi into hiding, especially for the 17th anniversary of his revolution, and cause him to abort his annual speech. Three key questions were raised during inter-agency debate:

1. Could Qadhafi be caused to lose confidence in himself?
2. If he could be kept in hiding for the anniversary, what impact would it have on the Libyan people?
3. What impact would it have on the disgruntled Libyan military?27

On August 6, the State Department circulated an inter-agency memo

suggesting a disinformation campaign, and advising that such a plan could elicit an assassination attempt of Qadhafi by internal factions.28 Various members of the separate advisory groups were wary; this offering could be interpreted as a violation of President Ford's Executive Order 11905, which prohibited U.S. officials from planning or carrying out the assassination of foreign leaders.29

A Crisis Pre-Planning Group consisting of representatives from the Departments of State and Defense, the CIA, and the NSC met on August 7 at the White House to discuss an overall plan depicted in the original State Department memorandum.30 Both the CIA and NSC officials approved the plan but National Security Advisor John M. Poindexter made some minor revisions on the memo; the most significant change was the deletion of the reference to the "assassination attempt." A meeting of the National Security Planning Group (NSPG) was then scheduled for August 14 to brief the president.

On August 12, Admiral Poindexter sent the president a three-page memorandum tracing the proposed actions to be taken in a "strategy to combine real and illusionary events--with the basic goal of making Qadhafi think that there is a high degree of internal opposition to him within Libya, that his key trusted aides are disloyal, that the U.S. is about to move against him militarily."31 This plan also called for "foreign media placements" by the CIA. The National Security Planning Group, the key Cabinet-level group which made decisions on the most sensitive foreign policy matters, met on August 14 and President Reagan approved the program as outlined by Poindexter; it was made formal in a National Security Decision Document.32

Poindexter's aide, Howard R. Teicher, the director of the office of political military affairs in the NSC, was the only non-Cabinet-level official at the NSPG meeting.33 Shortly thereafter, Teicher met with some news correspondents including the Wall Street Journal's John Walcott. Walcott had used Teicher as a source in the past when Walcott was with Newsweek magazine.34 The Wall Street Journal reported on August 25 that the United States and Libya were on a "collision course" and that U.S. military action against Libya was impending.35 The disinformation plan began to pick up momentum.

On August 24, the Washington Post ran an article by George C. Wilson which detailed plans of U.S.-Egyptian military maneuvers in the Mediterranean Sea, but it also reported the possibility of another American strike against Libya.36 Pentagon correspondents Fred Francis of NBC News and Carl Rochelle of Cable News Network found incorrect information in Wilson's story, specifically with the stated location of the Navy carrier USS John F. Kennedy. Both reporters believed that the Post story contained the initial account of the deception campaign contaminating the media.37

The Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post articles were followed by the normal media blitz which communicated the Administration-generated disinformation worldwide. Journalists were not totally duped by the deception as NBC News added the first hint of skepticism when it reported that "Administration officials seem to be hoping that by talking tough through the news media, they would scare Qadhafi."38 On August 26, the New York Times and the Post challenged the reports of new Libyan terrorism plans citing various "Administration officials" who

said there was no "hard evidence."[39] The Post even raised the issue of a possible disinformation campaign being initiated. The news media were obtaining conflicting statements from a multitude of "government officials" in their attempt to provide accurate information.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes in an August 27 news conference added to the confusion by declaring that although the Journal's account was "not authorized, it was highly authoritative."[40] On August 29, Leslie Gelb of the New York Times in a detailed news analysis seemed to have pieced together the deception plan, and provided what he perceived as the president's intentions:

> "...(goal) to get two messages across to Libya: that the Administration was seeing new signs of Libyan involvement in terrorist activity, and that it remained ready to punish Libya with military force if that activity continued. What Mr. Reagan's directive did not say was how this was to be done, the officials said, whether quietly through diplomatic channels or through a White House announcement or a report planted in the press. According to White House, State Department and Pentagon officials, one or more officials on the National Security Council staff, and perhaps elsewhere, took it upon themselves to provide information for a news article. That article, in the Wall Street Journal on Monday, set off a series of confirmations, denials, elaborations and clarifications that is still unfolding."[41]

Contradictory assertions from Administration officials continued to flow as the 'hound dog' media sought the most accurate story about the state of affairs with Libya. Broadening their search for the truth, the New York Times interviewed a senior advisor to West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on September 1, and were informed that "there were no indications that Libya was plotting 'spectacular terrorist actions'... and it may be that the Americans know more than we do..."[42] Even the in-depth news magazines were describing 'contradictory signals' from government agencies.

Bob Woodward later reported on the state of the U.S. intelligence operations during this confusing time (Woodward quoted 'one well-placed expert' in his article; William Casey was 'well-placed' at the time):

> "Intelligence experts said the U.S. intelligence agencies and the White House were on the lookout for anything on Gadhafi.... The administration and the intelligence agencies are paranoid about Gadhafi and for good reasons...members of the administration are not skilled at interpreting raw intelligence, saying it is an art form and that many officials are inclined to overstate the Libyan problem.... When intelligence is good and incontrovertible, there is agreement. You get disagreements when no one has enough good information."43

With the administration's lack of hard intelligence on Qadhafi and the news media effort to gain an accurate picture on the Libyan situation, the disinformation program was apparently working as planned. Keeping the media focused on Libya rather than other parts of the Middle East was a desired goal, at least for officials in the certain government agencies.44 Nationally Syndicated Columnist Dale Van Atta painted this picture in an interview with the author, and J. Anthony Lukas, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, provided further insight when he reviewed Bob Woodward's book, VEIL, commenting on Woodward's relationship with William Casey:

> "Could Casey's cultivation of Woodward have been part of a CIA disinformation scheme designed to mislead the press and public about the evolution of the administration's covert operations in the Middle East and Latin America? ...The very title of the book--VEIL--is a code word for a disinformation program adopted by the president, with Casey's enthusiastic support, to dissuade Libyan President Moammar Gadhafi from engaging in terrorism.... Surely Woodward--who long has been thought to have good sources in the intelligence community--must have been alive to the dangers inherent in his relationship with Casey. I see no evidence that he allowed himself to be unduly manipulated. But Casey's motives remain a murky issue at the heart of this book."45

Could the disinformation campaign against Qadhafi be part of a

larger cover-up operation? The amount of Qadhafi coverage dwindled in the early fall as the "Bombs of September" rocked Paris, and Iran and Syria became prime suspects in the brutal assault upon the Parisian populace.[46] On September 20, the Miami Herald's "Gadhafi Bankrolling Bombs in France?" article tried to keep the Libyan leader in the spotlight but media scrutiny began to shift to Iran and Syria.

On October 2, Bob Woodward produced the exclusive story on the Administration's disinformation campaign directed at Qadhafi. The news media were outraged that the government deliberately provided false information to discredit the Libyan leader, and in doing so, disseminated lies to the American people. The New York Times alone on October 3 produced six news stories and one editorial on the deception plan, pronouncing it "worthy of the K.G.B...and to the Reagan Administration's shame, the 'disinformation' worked all too well..."[47] Citing the initial Washington Post article, the news media attempted to expand the story through interviews with the president, the secretary of state and the national security advisor. Secretary of State Shultz did not confirm or deny the existence of a disinformation campaign but stated that "frankly, I don't have any problem with a little psychological warfare against Qaddafi."[48]

President Reagan, during an interview on October 3 by newspaper columnists and television commentators, said that he intended to keep Qadhafi off balance and that "we would just as soon have Mr. Gadhafi go to bed every night wondering what we might do" to deter terrorism.[49] In addition, White House spokesman Larry Speakes said the plan was geared at convincing Qadhafi that the United States was preparing to take

military action against him, when in fact, no attack was imminent.[50] Admiral Poindexter denied that there was any attempt at domestic disinformation.

Congressmen and news media executives were also queried about the administration's disinformation campaign. Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee said:

> "I think Kadhafi is a menace. I think terrorism is a menace. The American people want to see this connection exposed and then suppressed. But I think our greatest strength is still that we tell the truth as a government and there's credibility in what we say. And to the extent that we undermine that, we lose a very big foreign policy initiative."[51]

News executives expressed a similar view. A. M. Rosenthal, executive editor of the New York Times stated:

> "The idea that members of the United States Government actually sat around planning a disinformation policy is simply appalling. It raises all kinds of unpleasant questions -- has this happened before? Who authorized it? What does it do to our honor? The president should answer these questions for us all and then fire everybody involved. We should leave this kind of garbage to the Russians."[52]

Though he was not certain that the Washington Post's account of the deception plan was accurate, Arnaud de Borchgrave, editor of the Washington Times, added, "Disinformation being planted in the United States press taxes my credulity."[53] Both lawmakers and the Fourth Estate were piqued about the executive branch's deception effort.[54]

A public relations attempt on the part of the White House to set a new agenda came on October 4. Administration officials announced that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had assembled a special team of agents with the mission of locating the source of the August 25 Wall Street Journal story "that was purportedly generated by the

disinformation plan."55 At the same time, the Senate and House Intelligence Committees reported that they would investigate the disclosures in the Washington Post.

Three days later, another Administration endeavor at news management was the president's approval of a State Department office "charged with monitoring increasing Soviet efforts to discredit the U.S. by spreading false information.56 A State Department official cited coincidence that this announcement was made concurrent with the unveiling of a U.S. disinformation program.

On October 9, sandwiched between an editorial barrage expounding the loss of administration reliance, was the resignation of Bernard Kalb, the assistant secretary of state for public affairs. Kalb quit his assignment to protest the U.S. disinformation plan stating that "I do not want my own credibility to be caught up...in this controversy. ...You face a choice...whether to allow oneself to be absorbed in the ranks of silence or voice a modest dissent."57 While proclaiming the loss of a "fine journalist," Secretary of State Shultz continued his support of the disinformation issue with the simple belief that the ends (curbing Libyan terrorism) justified the means (lying to the media and thus the American public).58

The media vexation persisted as the American Society of Newspaper Editors sent a telegram to the president to protest the disinformation program allegedly run by the Administration. After examining evidence, the editors stated:

> "The society expresses outrage and alarm at any such effort to manipulate public opinion. The society respectfully asks the president and his aides to make unmistakably clear their disapproval of the practice of 'disinformation' at any level of government. ...(Newspaper editors were urged) to safeguard against any attempt by any source, under the cloak of anonymity, to mislead the American people."59

Following almost two weeks of daily reports on the disinformation campaign without direct Administration confirmation, Admiral Poindexter defended the government's right to use deception for security issues. In an interview on October 14, the national security advisor stated that deception could play an important role in combatting terrorism. Poindexter added that "we had no intent and did not plan or conspire to mislead the American press in any way...the objective of the program with Kadafi was to deceive Kadafi."60

On October 25, the State Department identified a National Security Council staff officer who was suspected of leaking 'unauthorized disclosures' related to the implementation of the Libyan disinformation plan. Elaine Morton, a 12-year veteran in the administration, refused to take a polygraph test in conjunction with the F.B.I. criminal investigation, and was transferred back to the State Department.61 This investigation was not really searching for the 'free-lancer' who fed the disinformation to the Wall Street Journal but for the insider who provided Woodward the data so as to precisely detail the deception plan in his early October articles.

* * *

On October 5, 1986, Eugene Hasenfus was shot down in a C-123 cargo plane while flying over Nicaragua. The Sandinistas captured with him a number of documents linking high-ranking U.S. officials including Vice

President George Bush to an illegal arms-smuggling operation to supply the Contras.62 Later that month, the media learned of former National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane's 'guns for terrorists in return for hostages' mission to Iran earlier in the year. It was at this point where Lt. Col. Oliver North, retired Maj. Gen. Richard V. Secord, the Israelis, the Contras, and an outraged Congress surfaced with the Iran-Contra situation.

Was the Libyan disinformation campaign a cover-up to mask the Administration's secret dealings with Iran to release American hostages? An engrossed news media might not be as attentive to other world affairs while they were initially reporting on potential international conflict between the U.S. and Libya. Abused journalists then took exception to being deceived and focused on haranguing the government for another month. How long had William Casey, Robert McFarlane, Oliver North, et. al. been hoodwinking the news media and the American public while plotting similar operations?

* * *

When the Washington Post first disclosed the National Security Advisor's three-page disinformation memorandum, the U.S. news media were outraged. The New York Times declared that there was no place in America for disinformation and that "no end can justify these means, not even overthrowing a sponsor of terror."63 Further analysis of the media revealed that this New York Times' statement reflected the attitude of the majority of journalists.

Professor Lawrence Martin-Bittman, director of the Disinformation Documentation Center at Boston University thought otherwise. Speaking

at a symposium discussing the Qadhafi campaign in October 1986, Professor Martin said that he had no ethical problem in using disinformation against a government which had been responsible for many political assassinations throughout the world.64 He raised another question about whether it was more ethical to use military force to bomb Libyan cities. Was disinformation an acceptable alternative?

(Professor Martin, along with H. Joachim Maitre, the acting dean of Boston University's School of Communications, established the Disinformation Center in November 1986. Martin taught a course called 'Disinformation and the Press,' and stated that his course "is designed to protect American journalists from being deceived."65 Maitre, a former East German MiG pilot who defected in 1953, recently worked for the U.S. Information Agency on propaganda-related missions for Afghanistan.66)

Professor Martin stated that disinformation requires a certain degree of professionalism in the conduct of its operations, "that is in channeling messages to the opponent, to the enemy."67 Secrecy was imperative. On the Qadhafi operation, he explained:

> "(professionalism) was missing in the whole Qadhafi operation, because from the very first day the disinformation was leaked to the Wall Street Journal, (if you can remember) there were rumors and speculations that this was a bluff, just a game to deceive Qadhafi. So from day one this operation was undermined."68

Did this disinformation plan work in limiting Libyan-sponsored terrorist activities? Professor Martin believed it did, at least for a short time until the Washington Post article exposed the program.

Professor Igor Lukes of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy provided a similar opinion during the same colloquium. Analyzing the

deception plan against Qadhafi, he believed the objective was neither immoral or illegal. He believed the disinformation program was fouled up from the start, "with the wrong people using the wrong channels."[69] He stated that the executive branch should never have initiated such an operation.

Professor Lukes also believed that the news media was not an effective channel of disinformation. He said that, "the U.S. government should never conduct disinformation operations which, in addition to the foreign target, also disinform the American public."[70] Plus he thought that diplomatic channels would be much more effective in "being deployed to spread rumors destabilizing our adversaries and destroying the espirit de corps of terrorist organizations."[71] The diplomats could disinform the target audience.

Professor Lukes concluded that "disinformation in the defense of democratic objectives was not unethical per se..." but it should be conducted by professionals who could properly define their target audience and their channel of disinformation.[72]

James C. Thomson Jr., professor of International Relations and Journalism at Boston University, discussed the effort to manipulate the foreign media. He believed that the attempt to target the foreign press without affecting our own national media would be futile in this age of advanced communications.[73] He also stated that "future and truthful administration pronouncements about Qadhafi would be (much more difficult for the media to believe)...(and in the use of disinformation in a democracy), the costs heavily outweigh the benefits."[74]

Though this discussion among the university scholars posed another

point of view, a public whose inclinations were similar was the military. It is important to understand the principles of information of the Department of Defense; that is to provide timely and accurate information to the media, Congress and the American people. Propaganda has no place in the Defense Department's public affairs programs according to a policy statement signed by the Secretary of Defense.75

Bearing that in mind, military officers that were interviewed, stressed the fact that the Libyan disinformation campaign could never be condoned. Navy Captain Jerry Burke, a speechwriter for the Secretary of Defense, expounded on the importance of the First Amendment freedoms, and explained that even strategic deception should be limited "in the event of a war, clearly for defined purposes."76

Lieutenant Colonel David Matthews, a National Security Council Legislative Liaison officer, took a more liberal approach to disinformation. He said this deliberate deception had a military use, "clearly in wartime, disinformation has a proper role in masking troop movements.'77

Firmly ruling out the use of disinformation, Major General Charles Bussey, Army Chief of Public Affairs, professed the importance of credibility:

> "...the last agency that you should have involved in a disinformation campaign would be an agency that has any type of responsibility to or communications with the American public.... Having said that, I say that rules out the NSC because you have the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, the top clearance official in the Department of Defense.78

General Bussey stressed the importance of giving the news media representatives the straight answer, establishing credibility and then

maintaining it. In analyzing the general's views, those of the other military men, and also the university professors' standpoints, there was a gray area regarding the use of disinformation. When examining the press, their outlook was a clear black and white.

Four newspapers, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times and the Wall Street Journal, were reviewed, and articles about the Libyan disinformation campaign were clipped for a one week period from October 3 to October 10, 1986. The Washington Post first broke the disinformation story on October 2. The New York Times produced the most column inches with seventeen stories, followed by the Post with nine and the L.A. Times with eight. The Wall Street Journal only printed two stories during this time, possibly due to the fact that the paper had played into the administration's hands in launching the Qadhafi deception plan.

Each newspaper similarly handled the unveiling of the disinformation plan citing Bob Woodward's article in the Post and the manipulation of the Wall Street Journal. They also agreed on the Administration's sanctioning of the National Security Advisor's memo to include the goals and objectives, and they covered the reaction from Congress. The New York Times, the Post and the L.A. Times all emphasized the President's interview and the Secretary of State's comments. They also discussed the deception of the media and Bernard Kalb's resignation as spokesman in protest. More importantly, they discussed how the surfacing of this plan would affect middle east terrorism (in an adverse way). The New York Times and the Post covered the FBI's role in trying to uncover the 'leaker' to the media. The

Journal and the New York Times addressed the public outrage of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

With the 'what they did' listed above; the 'how they did it' follows. Scathing headlines such as "Lies Wound America, Not Libya," "Caught in the Act," and "Administration 'Hurt'" showed the press' contempt about the disinformation which they helped spread. The newspapers hammered on the credibility issue. The Los Angeles Times harangued:

> "The Reagan Administration, which like its predecessors insists that its assessments of various international threats be accepted as honest and accurate, has now been caught out in a major effort to deceive and mislead."79

The Washington Post's initial story uncovering the disinformation campaign, showed "an Administration so frustrated by its inability to deal effectively with terrorism ... that it was prepared to adopt the extreme and dangerous step of creating a phony war scare."80

Journalists viewed the deception of the American public as the most serious offense from the Libyan campaign. New York Times columnist, James Reston, summed up the situation accurately:

> "All governments mislead the press and the people to some extent, particularly when they're in trouble, but most of them are usually smart enough not to write three-page memos on their calculated plans of deception. And some are even wise enough to admit their mistakes rather than make them worse."81

The international reaction to the disclosure of the Libyan disinformation campaign was minimal. Only a few foreign newspapers even raised the issue of trust between Washington and its NATO allies, with the British Daily Telegraph editorializing:

"If the charges are proven, they will make the task of explaining and justifying American policy in Europe noticeably more difficult. Those who take seriously the terrorist threat, especially that posed by state-sponsored Arab terror, will not be helped by such false alarms."82

The press was not only angered by the disinformation effort but also concerned about the government's ability to function effectively. With regard to the administration's perceived credibility loss in both national and international arenas, the Fourth Estate called the executive branch to veer back onto the truthful course.

* * *

This chapter discussed the Libyan disinformation campaign, addressed key issues regarding the outcome of this situation and provided an informal interpretative analysis of four major newspapers' coverage. The Iran-Contra situation abruptly halted the media's coverage of U.S. disinformation. The question of disinformation as a means of combatting terrorism had dropped out of the media's agenda.

Two books over a year later, have resurfaced the examination of U.S.-generated disinformation. Bob Woodward's novel, VEIL: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987, drew attention to himself as book reviewers questioned the relationship between William Casey and the author, how it tied back to the Libyan disinformation campaign, and if Woodward was "used" by Casey. Woodward also described some of the CIA's small, low-level disinformation campaigns of the past. He related "the recirculation back into the U.S. news media of disinformation planted abroad by the CIA is often referred to as 'blowback.'"83 In this Qadhafi disinformation campaign, what happened to the American media was more along the lines of 'blow-front.'

George F. Treverton's book, Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World, told of CIA plans that malfunctioned. One passage addressed the effectiveness of CIA deception in a negative manner citing an example of 'blowback.' The author described that:

> "...CIA Director William Casey, angry at his experts on terrorism for coming up with little evidence linking the Soviet Union to terror groups, ordered them to read Claire Sterling's famous book "The Terror Network." They did and found that virtually all of the examples she cited turned out to be CIA disinformation -- false stories planted in the foreign press that she unwittingly used in good faith."84

The review of the colloquium on the Libyan disinformation campaign provided the academic perspective whereby the discussion generated important questions and observations that the administration should consider. The military point of view varied among the different services as the concern arose about strategic deception in terms of protecting national security. The brief analysis of major newspapers provided some insight on how the news media handled this first major report of U.S. disinformation.

2. A REVIEW OF THE B-1B BOMBER PROGRAM

The federal deficit is one of the major problems facing the nation today. Attempts to balance the national budget have been on-going with the executive and legislative branches searching for the solution: increase taxes or cut spending. With the new administration's decision to avoid higher taxes, the most logical recourse is to reduce expenditures. The defense budget presents a massive target for budget reformers, and progress is already underway to reduce defense spending

through both equipment, weapons and personnel cutbacks. The various military services are constantly justifying their assets on Capitol Hill to avoid the risk of losing ones they deem as mission-essential.

The by-law requirement of the military to keep Congress informed on the status and development of programs, weapon systems and personnel, compels the armed forces to maintain accurate accounts. To trim the huge defense budget by eliminating waste, fraud and abuses in the system, Congress is constantly on the lookout for cost-overruns, defective equipment, and procurement problems. The Air Force's B-1 bomber program fit that 'faulty' matrix in its entirety.85

An analysis of the House Armed Services Committee's report on the B-1 bomber back in March 1987, revealed the congressional criticism of the U.S. Air Force for its lack of "candor" in keeping the Congress informed.86 Yet nowhere in this document does it mention that the Air Force lied to or attempted to disinform the Congress. And a review of the B-1 bomber program showed that American policymakers had been 'induced' to adopt policies against this country's interests, through political lobbying efforts.87 Would the legislative branch berate the Air Force provided it knew that its own 'backyard' was not clean? This is speculation yet the media continue to pound the B-1 bomber program even today as the Pentagon Defense-Contracting situation unfolds.88

The B-1B Program Review was held to discuss four issues: the current capability and limitations of the B-1 bomber, Air Force management of the program, estimated total cost of the program, and lessons learned for future applications.89 This document contained a

summary of findings which addressed eleven separate 'bullets.' The one 'bullet' that pertained to this study was the finding that "Information provided to the Congress by the Air Force did not afford a balanced assessment on the status (of the bomber); as a result, Air Force credibility has suffered."90

The report traced the history of the new strategic bomber since its approval in October 1981, and detailed the many problems which included higher-than-anticipated part failure rates, system capabilities deficiencies, increased costs, Air Force mismanagement, and to a lesser degree, contractor shortcomings. In a separate section labeled "Promises To Congress," the account reiterated the Air Force's assurance of "an effective manned penetrating bomber that would be fielded in record time and at targeted cost."91

In two consecutive segments where the congressional committee appeared to be attaching blame to the appropriate agency, "Secretarial Programs Review" and "Air Force Credibility" directed criticism at the Air Force. In the first instance, the report cited a hearing on March 4, 1987 where the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation testified that the Air Force was not "completely candid" with Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger.92

Two separate accounts 'damned' the Air Force in the "Credibility" chapter. During an April 19, 1986 hearing before the House Panel on Acquisition and Procurement Policy, the Air Force gave no indication of system inadequacies that would prevent the bomber from being deployed to tactical units by the target date in 1987. In the second hearing on February 25, 1987, the Assistant Comptroller General stated:

> "What we have lacked to date is candor on the part of the Air Force with respect to these problems, and that there needs to be better understanding between the Air Force and this committee and other committees as to what the problems are, and then we can get on with fixing them up."93

This section continued that the Air Force in almost four years of congressional testimony, had not given an "accurate assessment of problems" regarding the whole B-1 bomber program.

The final "Lessons For The Future" chapter questioned the Air Force's ability to manage other programs. The report asserted that:

> "Because of the degree of uncertainty with the program and the apparent inability of the Air Force to develop and share accurate information on system development, a most prudent course of action may be to avoid additional significant financial commitments until an independent assessment of the aircraft's capabilities is available.... Specifically, it appears that the acquisition management system provides incentives for reporting favorable information about programs but readily discourages dissemination of unfavorable information."94

The concluding statement called for the committee to find alternate means of procurement and procurement strategies for programs underway or anticipated.

The State Department's definition of disinformation in Chapter III is "a broad concept that includes any government-sponsored communication in which deliberately misleading information is passed to targeted individuals, groups, or governments with the purpose of influencing foreign elite or public opinion."95 Could the Air Force's treatment of the B-1B bomber program fall into the above definition?

Rudy DeLeon, a professional staff member of the House Armed Services Committee, would not go to that extreme. When interviewed about disinformation in general, he cited an example of tactical deception as "incentives for reporting favorable information about

programs" in high-level defense acquisition management.96 He brought up the B-1 bomber program as a case of Air Force misinformation but "I wouldn't call that disinformation because disinformation has a specific realm..."97

The B-1B Program Review was a mild, congressional scolding of the Air Force. The U.S. news media continued to harangue both the Air Force and Congress for their roles in the B-1 bomber playbill. In March 1988, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, Nick Kotz, produced his book, Wild Blue Yonder; an exhaustive account of the politics of the B-1 bomber.98 Given outstanding reviews from Jim Lehrer of the MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour, Dan Rather of CBS Evening News, and the New York Times Seymour Hersh, Kotz's story placed the blame evenly on the Air Force. Congress, defense contractors and their lobbyists for the problems of the strategic bomber.

Wild Blue Yonder detailed how thousands of jobs were in existence throughout forty-eight states, created by the defense contractors who supplied parts or services for the building of one hundred bombers.99 Kotz told how political support for the B-1 was gained from Congress by industrial lobbyists, even to the point of obtaining deals for locating bomber bases in various congressional districts.

Kotz's book produced a new understanding of the politics of defense acquisition which is currently undergoing a searing media review. His account brought light on the reason for the congressional document, The B-1B: A Program Review, not to be classified as an example of disinformation by the legislative committee. A key example of interest group pressure on congressmen occurred in early March 1988 when

Representative Samuel Stratton, D-N.Y., changed his view on the B-1 bomber problems. Stratton, chairman of the subcommittee that co-authored the B-1B Program Review, said, "...(I have) visited some B-1 facilities and decided that the program is in better shape than once thought."100

This account of a government agency's documented deception reinforces the warning to the American public to carefully analyze information. As depicted earlier in this chapter, foreign regimes are not the only sources of misleading data. The news media continue their attempts to provide accurate accounts of events, yet journalists must thoroughly research and confirm sources. Credibility is at stake and embarrassment is just one of the consequences.

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CHAPTER VI

PERSPECTIVES ON DISINFORMATION: INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED OPINION LEADERS

Military officials, Pentagon correspondents, government officials, media representatives, private-sector professionals and a university professor were interviewed in the spring of 1987 as an integral part of the research for this thesis. Military personnel who were knowledgeable in Public Affairs policy were selected for interviews. Correspondents who covered the Pentagon and were familiar with the Libyan disinformation campaign were chosen for interviewing. Government officials, media representatives and private-sector professionals who were knowledgeable in the methods of Soviet Active Measures were selected for interviews. The university professor who was actually involved in the fabrication of Communist-bloc disinformation prior to defecting to the west, was selected for interviewing.

The government and military officials interviewed as part of the thesis research were:

Maj. Gen. Charles D. Bussey: former Army Chief of Public Affairs

Capt. Jerry Burke: speechwriter for the Secretary of Defense

Lt. Col. David Matthews: National Security Council Legislative Liaison

Herbert Romerstein: U.S. Information Agency

The Pentagon correspondents and media representatives interviewed and identified in this chapter are:

Norman Black - Pentagon Correspondent, Associated Press

Tom Diaz - Assistant Managing Editor, The Washington Times

Fred Francis - Pentagon Correspondent, NBC News

Vernon Guidry - Pentagon Correspondent, The Baltimore Sun

Carl Rochelle - Pentagon Correspondent, Cable News Network

Dale Van Atta - Nationally Syndicated Columnist

The private-sector professionals interviewed were:

Dr. Robert Hunter: Director, European Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies

Lyn Nofziger - former press secretary to President Reagan, political consultant

The university professor interviewed was:

Dr. Lawrence M. Martin-Bittman - Professor of Journalism, Boston University and director of The Disinformation Documentation Center

The interviews were arranged over a two-month period and were then conducted during four-week period during April and May 1987. Additional interviews were sought but personal work requirements limited the number of persons to be consulted. Each person interviewed was asked similar questions concerning: --the definition of disinformation, --the difference between disinformation and propaganda, --the existence of a disinformation program in the U.S. government, --the justification criteria of such a program, --the signs to look for, --the government agency which could run this type of program, and --the possibility of

government bias among the media when the Libyan disinformation memo was leaked. Eleven interviews were conducted face-to-face, and two were conducted by telephone (Herb Romerstein and Dale Van Atta).

Each interview lasted approximately thirty minutes with the exception of Dale Van Atta's interview, which stretched to one and one-half hours. Despite busy schedules and deadline commitments, each person provided insightful, professional responses. This chapter contains a summary of the interviews and focuses on the seven questions about disinformation.

The Academic Perspective

The need to educate future journalists on how to identify disinformation and the consequences of its publication, were addressed as key points. As a career Czechoslovakian intelligence officer who specialized in active measures during the 1950s and 1960s, Dr. Martin-Bittman provided an inside view on disinformation. He defined disinformation as: deliberately distorted information that was inserted or introduced into the communications system of the opponent with the objective to deceive either the public at-large or to deceive the decision-making element in a population.[1]

> "It can be political, economic or scientific disinformation...while disinformation is secret manipulation...it is done through secret channels using secret methods."

In response to the differences between disinformation and propaganda, he explained that propaganda was an outright message of persuasion. Martin-Bittman told how every country has a department or organization dealing in propaganda:

"The United States Information Agency is the largest American propaganda institution...for presenting the American message to the outside world."

Regarding a current, coordinated disinformation policy or strategy within the United States government, Martin-Bittman did not believe that one existed now but cited CIA involvement in the mid-1970s.

"...when the CIA was investigated by the Senate--by the Congress--many of these operations were publicly exposed and it was a very serious blow for the CIA. And then...the Senate and the House instituted a new arrangement. Every covert operation had to be discussed with several of the special Congressional committees."

The question of justifying the use of disinformation by the U.S. government is controversial and there are many ethical and legal considerations. Martin-Bittman believed that disinformation should never be used by a democratic government. He provided an example, though, where disinformation could be beneficial in sparing lives:

"...when I'm thinking about using military force, and send 100 planes and bomb a foreign country, or use disinformation, and I can achieve the same thing with the help of a disinformation campaign. I don't see any problem why I should not use disinformation instead of airplanes. I don't have any problem thinking about using disinformation against terrorist organizations if I can save lives or hostages by using this information. Why not? Is it unethical to use disinformation against (terrorist) organizations around around the world? I don't have a problem with that."

The methods to detect a disinformation campaign can be very difficult to determine. One can be to analyze handwriting to identify forgeries. Another tactic would be to trace information sources. Identifying the foreign press with known ties or influence with Soviet-supported newspapers is another method.

> "One of these operations was exposed in the last couple years... (involving) the Greek newspaper, Ethnos, which means nation. A very important case where the newspaper was established in 1981 with the help of Soviet money, Soviet financing....If you analyze Ethnos today, if you use content analysis of what Ethnos is saying, you will discover that Ethnos is very strongly...pro-Soviet on all major international issues. And it's because they own the paper and it's the permanent basis, not once in three months, or one story about some anti-American message. This is a paper coming every day with the same message."

In Martin-Bittman's opinion, the U.S. government agency that could run a disinformation program--the agency with the resources--is the CIA. The CIA's ability to operate secretly is the key issue, despite the proper mechanism to inform the President and the Congressional committees. Martin-Bittman offered other channels of disinformation:

> "...what hasn't been discussed in the press, is the fact that there are many other disinformation channels that can be used. The press is only one of them. And that means we can use a great number of existing channels like personal contacts between diplomats, personal contacts between politicians, with politicians of foreign countries. We can use channels for disinformation when the oral/verbal message is totally avoided."

In response to the media bias question on the disinformation memo leak, Martin-Bittman believed that the Wall Street Journal was simply an easy channel to get the information rolling. He thought the Wall Street Journal was considered to be an easier medium to get the word out.

The U.S. Government and Military Perspective

U.S. government and military officials were straightforward and explicit in their comments concerning disinformation. Herbert Romerstein was most familiar with disinformation as his position at the U.S. Information Agency permits constant analysis of Soviet message traffic. His definition of disinformation was very similar to the working definition detailed in Chapter II: deliberately false

information spread by a government as part of a campaign to influence a target area; sometimes elites, sometimes the media, and sometimes the general populace. Its purpose, as part of an "Active Measures" campaign, is to get a specific action from the target.2

Romerstein explained that one of the differences between disinformation and propaganda was that propaganda is generalized, and not specifically targeted to get a specific reaction. He expanded on the question by pointing out that propaganda may be true or false or a combination of both; disinformation is always either totally false or partially false.

In response to the question about a deception campaign within the federal government, he strongly replied: "No, I know that the U.S. government does not have a program of disinformation." Romerstein added that a disinformation program could not be justified in the U.S. government but provided another point:

> "...I would differentiate between disinformation and military deception. The Soviets have a tendency to move those two concepts very close together. In western concepts, we believe that they are very far apart. The very famous quote from Winston Churchill, that "...in wartime, the truth is so precious that it has to be attended by a bodyguard of lies..." was not saying that we should lie about Adolf Hitler, but that we needed to lie to Adolf Hitler as to whether the D-Day invasion would take place, when it would take place...so military deception is quite different from political deception. And a democratic society does not benefit from political deception...it's really an essential element of our own defense, that truth is an effective defense from lies... First of all, they get found out, they degrade debate, they interfere with the ability of people to understand the issues. It's not productive for a democratic society to engage in this kind of thing."

Romerstein was very specific in explaining what signs to look for to distinguish disinformation. He pointed out that being misinformed

was not being disinformed; misinformation is an incorrect statement passed on in error. He explained that disinformation is a particular tool of an "Active Measures of influence" operation and there are numerous things to look for. Romerstein developed a useful scenario:

> "A KGB officer plants a false story in an Indian newspaper. This story is now available in English and it gets picked up by (Pravda). Now it's available in Russian.... It goes out on the TASS wire; now it's translated into every language in the world. And that means that a KGB officer in Mexico City or in Lisbon has it in the language of the country he's in. (That agent) can bring it to his contact in the (local) press and suggest to him that he carry the story; not as coming from TASS or coming from (Pravda), but coming from the original Indian newspaper. ...So, there are two levels of cover and plausible denial in the operation. If he's forced to abandon one level, which is 'I saw it in the (Indian) newspaper, he can go to the other level, 'I got it from TASS.' But he never has to go to the level that he was really handed (the story) by his KGB contact."

Romerstein explain that it was this kind of 'bounce around the world' story that gives his agency an indication of an "Active Measures" campaign is being conducted.

He emphasized that journalists must 'check out' their sources, and that his agency was in the business of assisting journalists in confirming their stories. "If you've got a scoop, ...we're not going to give somebody else your story." They also will assist the international media.

Asked who should run a disinformation campaign within the U.S. government if it was deemed necessary, Romerstein replied that no element in our government was authorized to do this.

General Bussey, the Army's Chief of Public Affairs, defined disinformation as a deliberate effort to mislead for an intended purpose. He differentiated between disinformation and military

deception; with the former being an obvious lie, and the latter having necessary applications in wartime.3

In response to justifying the U.S. government's use of a disinformation program, General Bussey did not believe there was ever an instance to initiate such a campaign.

> "...when I look at what I believe this country stands for, when I look at our Constitution, I look at our openness...turn all the cards face up on the table. That's kind of our way of doing business."

In General Bussey's opinion, a U.S. government agency that has any type of responsibility or communications with the American public should not be involved with a disinformation program. He stressed the importance of credibility, and giving the straightforward answer.

Navy Captain Jerry Burke, a speechwriter for the Secretary of Defense, stressed the difference between misinformation and disinformation. To be misinformed, someone has made a sincere effort to get you the facts, but he's just wrong. Disinformation means to deliberately mislead.4

In a communications theory point of view, Burke explained:

> "...you've got the transmitter and the receiver...but you're trying inculcate in a target a perception, and hopefully resultant behavior which favors you and disfavors the enemy. The target can be the enemy. The target can be third party mutuals. The parties can be the press.... The critical thing is that it is a deliberate effort undertaken with a purpose, and the purpose is to foster opinions, behavior, attitudes, actions which are to the benefit of the person engaged in (disinformation)."

In response to identifying the signs of a disinformation campaign, Captain Burke first emphasized the importance of understanding the adversary's goals and objectives; note how they react to communications. He asserted that once one understands his enemy, one

can better see the attempt to manipulate or deceive. In writing speeches for the Secretary of Defense, his job is to provide information that can be expressed "clearly, logically, with data to support the conclusions of our positions." Communicate to inform not to disinform or misinform.

Captain Burke also pointed out that "the very openness of our society leaves us with some vulnerabilities." The way our news media works sometimes provides an open forum for Soviets to push their product (propaganda or disinformation). Through news analysis or debate, the American public gets the Soviet line officially or unofficially.

Regarding justification of a U.S. disinformation program, Captain Burke stated that only in wartime could such a campaign be vindicated. He continued:

> "...I think if we are asked to maintain the moral high ground, that can be eroded with one instance. Look at the erosion that the Iran thing did, and everybody is looking suspiciously at what people are saying.... I think the First Amendment is critical, and it would certainly seem to me that only in the event of war...clearly for defined purposes."

He expanded on the U.S. government use of a disinformation campaign:

> "...very little attention then is given to how the Soviet's react to what people are saying. ...how do we measure (Soviet response). Soviets have a massive campaign going on. They understand the press. They understand how to get a letter to the editor; how to get on Nightline.... It is only during the last year that we have even looked at Soviet television, and recognized it as a source of information. So, there aren't many people to my knowledge that are looking at the Soviet press and looking at what the Soviets are saying with a view toward getting a base line, and then measuring sensitivity or departures from that base line."

Regarding which U.S. agency should be responsible to conduct a disinformation campaign, Captain Burke said that the National Security

Council should be given the action, again stressing only in wartime. He said that the "CIA's job is to provide thorough, timely information on your adversaries' capabilities and intentions." He cautioned that this should be at a strategic level, as military intelligence should handle the tactical function. Due to policy implications, the NSC should be responsible with certain CIA assistance.

Captain Burke also developed an interesting scenario to explain disinformation by omission. He talked about a commercial vessel that according to the press release, said it would be doing some oceanographic mining. The press release did not mention that the ship was partially funded by the CIA. Each day, the ship conducts its oceanographic errands for awhile then assists the CIA in an unrelated mission. He added:

> "It doesn't raise any flags, and it's lost in the noise of the steady state of information. I think that's another key point. Is there so much information in our society that it is exceptionally difficult to pick out the little bumps that are significant?"

Army Lt. Col. David Matthews of the National Security Council's Legislative Liaison Office identified multiple aspects of disinformation. He listed the first one as military disinformation where in a peacetime role "you'd probably want to do that in conjunction with 'black' programs."[5] Lt. Col. Matthews did not expand on this area; he was read on for four 'black' programs, but he did not pursue them. In wartime, he believed that disinformation had a proper role in masking troop movements.

In a political sense, he explained that disinformation should probably be used in concert with covert activities. He gave an example

of this on covering strategic arms talks, "...this is a personal view, but I would imagine we would not want to give away negotiating positions."

In response to the differences between disinformation and propaganda, he described the former as having a very clear "benchmark" with a very strategic goal or objective "that you're wanting to mask something because there is a goal beyond that." He defined the latter as that which fosters a positive perception of your political/military goals or the particular form of government "you're trying to foster and propagate."

Regarding "positive lying", Lt. Col. Matthews explained that it was:

> "information is temporarily masked and I think that the Congress has superimposed a very rigid set of standards that the intelligence community has to adhere to.... There has been a National Security Decision Directive that has laid out some very clear guidelines as to what is proper and what is improper. That goes back to the fact 'does the NSC need to be revised?' And clearly no. I think what we had was an aberration (regarding the Libyan disinformation memo) of a system here. There wasn't proper exercise of existing apparatus to insure that there was not abuse."

Lt. Col. Matthews stated that disinformation campaigns are clearly proactive, and that there were instances where such a program could be justified. He pointed out that if the safeguards were there, disinformation could be put to use within a democracy; especially to save lives. He gave examples such as masking a strategic program designed to enhance national security, or to protect lives during an intelligence gathering operation.

In Lt. Col. Matthews' opinion, the U.S. government agency that should be given the responsibility to run a disinformation campaign is the National Security Council. He explained that anyone could

theoretically run one, even the "cookie-crumblin,' tea-sippin' State Department," yet he believed that the responsibility should lie with the NSC to insure adherence to the proper safeguards.

Asked if the western media could handle a disinformation program, he replied:

> "I don't think that they are smart enough to know there is one in many cases. If the only time that the Soviets get caught is when their efforts are so inept that the document is clearly a forgery or...they started this one that AIDS originated at Ft. Detrick...and I'm playing into the Soviets' hands because now I'm repeating it to you.... ...So we're all playing into their hands."

The Media Perspective

A wide range of responses sums up the data gathered from the news media representatives. The four Pentagon military affairs correspondents talked along similar lines, especially on the need of properly 'sourcing' a story. The Washington Times assistant managing editor, Tom Diaz, stressed the importance of understanding governments, knowing the system and being able to analyze the dialogue. Nationally Syndicated Columnist Dale Van Atta turned out to be an expert on disinformation, providing new, insightful information on the Libyan disinformation situation.

Norman Black, the military affairs correspondent for the Associated Press, defined disinformation as a deliberate decision by a government official to provide information that he is presenting as factual, when in fact, it's not, and it's aimed at some secret agenda.6 Talking in terms of U.S. government-generated disinformation, he stated that a reporter must do his checking to counter this:

"...when you get leaks in this town (Washington, D.C.), there is almost always a hidden agenda behind the official that's doing the leaking. I mean you have to deal with that. At least to know if nothing else, if you can ascertain what the motive was in putting that out."

Black also believed that use of a disinformation campaign within the U.S. government could never be justified. He continued that military deception could be accomplished with the media 'on board,' explaining that the military censorship rules would insure the protection of American lives, operational security, and troop movements.

Black did not feel that there was any Administration media bias when the Wall Street Journal was provided with the disinformation to get their Libyan "Collision Course" story rolling. He stated:

"I just tend to think it was more happen-stance than anything else...(the Administration) lost it because...that just violates to many fundamental rules of the way we operate in this town. The fact that the American news media was being used...that's what I mean when I say that it's automatically going to become the story and it's going to destroy everything that they hoped to do."

Tom Diaz, the assistant managing editor for the Washington Times, provided a similar definition of disinformation: the deliberate and calculated public dissemination of false information.[7] He viewed propaganda as a kind of incessant and continuing promulgation of a point of view, which might in and of itself be valid or it might not be.... One more point he made was in:

"distinguishing propaganda from disinformation, and that is that disinformation is often not apparent where propaganda generally is to an informed person. An informed person who knows about a given subject can say this is propaganda. (In) disinformation there is no way on the external (end) of it to know that, if it is skillfully done, that it is false. That's the whole idea of disinformation."

Diaz did not believe that the U.S. government had any on-going

disinformation programs...certainly not on the scale with the Soviet Union, "this is big business." He added that the U.S. government does not attempt to exploit American journalists, but:

> "There is, and I believe we wrote about this in some of our editorials, there is a perfectly legitimate strategy of state survival particularly in a wartime situation or in one of the kind of struggles that I think we are engaged in with the Soviet Union...a strategic deception. If you are going to strike at point 'A' you may want to lead the enemy to believe that you are going to strike at point 'B.' I think some people have wrongly confused that with disinformation. I think our government probably does that. And ought to."

Regarding the methods to detect a disinformation program, Diaz explained that journalists, especially foreign media, have to be careful not to cite sources (other media) without first checking their credentials, evidence of the source or what its (the source's) track record has been in the past.

Diaz discussed the nature of the U.S. news media, journalists who can determine if they have come across a piece of disinformation:

> "...you have some common network of assumptions about our country. One of them is, sure, our government makes plenty of mistakes, and these are mistakes we want to point out too. But we don't believe that this system is inherently evil and that the people who are elected and appointed to offices in the United States are of the same kind, and have been brought up through the same system as the Soviets. The Soviet system awards people who work in the KGB, who deal in beguile and deception and treachery..."

Diaz concluded that teaching future journalists the basics of understanding sources would be beneficial. He believed if young journalists know where it (the story) is coming from, what are the motivations, what is the track record, and if they learned to make that kind of partial assessment then let the reader decide, disinformation could be greatly reduced.

"Disinformation is when a public official knowingly gives you wrong information," according to Fred Francis, Pentagon correspondent for NBC News.[8] Regarding the difference between disinformation and propaganda, he explained that propaganda was simply promoting one's own point of view, and that it contained varying degrees of accuracy and truth. He continued:

> "Propaganda comes from the White House every single day. I mean when (chief spokesman) Marlin Fitzwater stands up in the Pentagon Briefing Room, it's the Administration's point of view. Now, don't say it's disinformation because they don't lie to you. They don't lie to you from this podium at the Pentagon and the Briefing Room twice a week. But it is their propaganda, their point of view."

In response to whether a U.S. government-sponsored disinformation program currently existed, Francis did not suspect any campaign within the United States. But he did not rule out the possibility of the CIA or the intelligence services of the State Department using disinformation with foreign journalists in other countries. And he believed that using disinformation overseas was also wrong. Francis pointed out that through modern communications and the wire services, bad information transmitted from overseas could find its way back to polluting the American public, even through the major newspapers.

> "I feel very strongly that what makes our democracy vibrant is the free flow of honest information and legitimate ideas. And whether you pump out disinformation at some embassy in Baghdad or in Lagos, Nigeria, or you do it to Biloxi, Mississippi or Jacksonville, Florida, there is very little difference."

Francis also recommended that journalists search out multiple sources to guard against disinformation. He discussed one instance of U.S. government-generated disinformation that bordered on the edge of military deception. This case occurred prior to the U.S. bombing attack

on Libya on April 15, 1986. Francis detailed how ABC News correspondent John McWethy had reported that President Reagan had decided not to attack Libya due to certain reasons. McWethy's report was the lead story on ABC's Friday night broadcast and was later picked up by all of the wire services. "Classic case of disinformation," according to Francis.

The Pentagon correspondent for the Baltimore Sun, Vernon Guidry, defined disinformation as a deliberate falsehood or misrepresentation designed to create a specific effect. He explained that disinformation suggested inaccuracy as opposed to propaganda which was approximately true, more general in nature.

He was uncertain whether or not the U.S. government had any on-going disinformation programs but he believed that U.S. officials "made use of disinformation through foreign journalists."9 Regarding signs to detect a disinformation attempt, he pointed out the "exclusive that you can't confirm."

In response to the 'detecting disinformation' question, Guidry thought that the western media would handle this poorly, and he cited an example of a U.S. journalist being duped:

> "...the Soviet Union had been peddling for sometime the notion that U.S. servicemen are spreading AIDS all around, and ...there was an episode where Dan Rather (CBS News) simply read an item on air, saying once again the Soviet Union has charged that according to some Soviet journalist that American servicemen are spreading AIDS. So, apparently they (the Soviet Union) do score an occasional success."

An occasional success is a tremendous understatement as Nationally Syndicated Columnist Dale Van Atta pointed out numerous examples of Soviet disinformation during the one and one-half hour interview. He

defined disinformation as something that is totally wrong and used to pursue ideological policy lines.10 He compared disinformation to propaganda, with the latter being something that is generally factual but slanted for ideology.

Van Atta did not believe that the U.S. government was currently running a disinformation campaign, "other than what the CIA does around the world." In his opinion, he believed that there were times when the U.S. government could justify using a disinformation campaign, "but very carefully." He explained a situation that translated to only in times when the United States was in imminent danger. Van Atta added that "strategic deception in wartime is probably very acceptable. Whether it is acceptable in peacetime is another thing..."

The next passage from the interview regarding signs to identify disinformation has current connotations and must be presented in its entirety:

> "I faced this thing in December 1985 when I found out that we were selling arms to Iran in return for hostages. A full 11 months or a year before it was made public. And I did say that it was disinformation because it came out of nowhere. And I called several people whom I trusted and they said that it was wrong. And people whom I trusted and, as it turned out, people who didn't know. But under normal circumstances, you would say well somebody is trying to run a little deception here. Somebody is putting out a false story and the fact that these other guys don't know makes it a deception campaign, which anybody would have found with Libya if they had checked with two or three people....
>
> In the case of Iran, I did get it confirmed from two or three middle level people by January, and then wasn't positive the President knew. So then I met with the President and he confirmed it to me in February. So it wasn't deception anymore. I had a high level source and other good sources. So that would be in terms of a sign, the first thing is a gut instinct that this doesn't sound right, that it doesn't fit with what's going on. So that's why I say it's one of the reasons it was so hard for anybody in the media to report after we originally broke the story in April on Iran arms. They (the media) kept coming back to me and said,

'You're the victim of disinformation, you're a victim of hoax.' And I kept saying to them, you're the victim of the greatest Libya disinformation campaign ever. I mean they were making a big deal out of this Libya disinformation thing. I said, 'You guys are the victim of the overall great disinformation campaign; having spent all your time and effort on leaks about Libya.' When the real terrorists, we're dealing with them.

...even though I couldn't write the story because they told me the hostages would be killed and I believed them, and still don't disbelieve them that something might have happened if we (Jack Anderson and Van Atta) had broken it that early. We harangued about Iran in twenty columns in December and January, about how they were the real terrorist threat. So in general terms, I thought that was the great disinformation campaign."

Van Atta pointed out that the real disinformation program was the U.S. government hiding the Syria and Iran involvement.

Carl Rochelle, Cable News Network's military affairs correspondent had strong feelings about this topic, "Disinformation sucks.!"[11] He had some different ideas on the Libyan disinformation campaign:

"It was intended to be a deception campaign...and to conduct a deception campaign, you have to deal in disinformation with the media. You start lying, and immediately the credibility goes away."

Rochelle pointed out that one possible sign to identify a disinformation campaign is when an official who never talks or does not want to release any information suddenly offers up some new report. "When things start pulling out of line, you start asking yourself why." He recommended that journalists check out their sources thoroughly.

In response to whether there were any disinformation programs within our federal government, Rochelle discussed deception at different levels. He did not believe there was any program with the media specifically targeted. He thought that the CIA was conducting disinformation programs, and the Department of Defense in terms of

psychological operation. He added:

> "...I'll give you a classic example. Most of us who work around here and who are involved in technical stuff, have a pretty darned good idea of the capabilities of the KH-11 and KH-12 (satellites), which send down satellite pictures, tremendous pictures. Well, the Pentagon, the people who deal with this stuff rarely, almost never give you a hard picture that this equipment has taken or electronically created. If they want to get a picture out (they give you) an artist rendering of this...to make it look just fuzzy enough so we aren't exactly sure what the capabilities are. Is that disinformation or not? Well, yeah, sort of. It's the idea telling the Soviets that we are not going to tell you all the information, so you've omitted a little something. But I think it's certainly acceptable. Why would you want to confirm for the Soviets that you have the capability to read over their shoulder..."

Regarding the justification of a disinformation campaign by the U.S. government, Rochelle simply stressed that the media should never be 'used' for this type of operation.

He explained that the Wall Street Journal was not given the "Collision Course" story on Libyan deception because of any Administration media bias. Rochelle pointed out that the Administration was looking for a medium with a certain kind of dissemination and the Journal filled the requirement:

> "Essentially there are three or four newspapers on the east coast, the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Journal. the L.A. Times on the west coast. Of course, there are a lot of terrific newspapers around but you want one that is read here in Washington. And we were what we called 'driven' by the Wall Street Journal story.... My office was calling saying that the Journal has reported, and I would say that the best information that I've got is that the Journal is wrong. But you can't ignore the story, so you have to do that, 'the published report says this. that and the other.' And your appendage on the end of the story is that 'the sources at the Pentagon tell me that no ships have been moved into position and there is no battle plan.' Well, the Wall Street Journal drove a lot of us...(the NSC) probably found the best channel they could..."

One method to initiate a disinformation story is to provide a

source with an account. Rochelle discussed how some reporters gain their information:

> "With sourced or learned information, there are different levels...you learn that Washington has its own language. Totally off the record means that you can't use it (the information). All you can use it for is to get smart, to know more about the situation. You may be able to weave into something later on by talking to someone and having that knowledge to ask a question that will now make that information on the record from another direction, which means you can use it. There is background information which is attributable to a source. Now usually, the source sets the guidelines...and the guidelines usually have to be accepted in advance.... (Regarding an anonymous source... sometimes it may be worth looking into...you call up and say I'd like to get a briefing up at DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) on thus and so. And those things are on the record. Anytime you take a DIA briefing, it's attributable to 'intelligence officials' or 'Pentagon sources' or something like that..."

He continued about the use and misuse of classifying information so as to avoid discussing controversial material.

Rochelle further explained the importance of trust between journalists and their sources, the relationship with public affairs officers (which was extremely positive), and the importance of news correspondents learning their jobs.

The 'Private-sector' Professional Perspective

The strengths of our country such as the American public and the First Amendment set the tone when discussing disinformation from this vantage point. Dr. Robert Hunter, Director of European Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, defined disinformation to mean a deliberate effort to represent something you know to be false in a way, in a form and through media to connote that it is actually truth.12 Aside from the normal activities of the CIA, he did not believe that a disinformation campaign currently existed within the

federal government.

The question of justifying the use of disinformation by the U.S. government evoked a response that there were essentially three requirements for valid covert action. Hunter stated that first, safeguards should be taken to keep the program secret, for it to be effective. He added:

> "Secondly, it must be something that saves other vital assets of the United States; particularly (American) lives. ...Third, however, it's the most difficult, is it has to be for ends and through means which if revealed, would have the broad popular support of the American people, which is consistent with American values. ...there are circumstances where the American use of disinformation would indeed be the proper thing for the government to do. The burden, however in my judgement, is overwhelmingly on the proponents especially when if something is discovered, you get a black eye. What happened in regard to the Libyan thing last year, is when it was discovered, it discredited a wide variety of other aspects of the U.S. anti-terrorism policy because it led people who did not want to support us to say, 'obviously we can believe nothing that you say about Libya.'"

In Hunter's opinion, the U.S. government agency that should run a disinformation program would be the Central Intelligence Agency. He stated that the CIA has the assets to conduct such an operation. He believed that "running it out of the NSC is foolish, just as we saw in the last year because that body has to retain a reputation for honesty and probity within the bureaucracy and with the American people."

On the methods to detect a disinformation campaign, Hunter briefly covered some Soviet "Active Measures:"

> "The Soviet Union runs disinformation on a routine basis, no question about that. Now they fabricate documents, they plant stories, they suborn individuals, they have their own captive group of journalists around the world, and that's all very well known. (To detect disinformation) ...is people being smart and looking for stuff that doesn't just add up, being skeptical, asking questions, and the like. ...A good case, an example right now, is the Soviets are running around claiming that AIDS was invented at Fort Detrick

(Maryland), in its American germ warfare (labs). Which is an absolute calumny. The Soviets have to be called to account on it and the absurdity of the notion exposed. And in the fullness of time, and also this needs to be brought home to Soviet leaders, that if they hope to sustain a relationship with the United States including this kind of treaty (INF) they're looking for, that's got to stop. And they won't stop it, but you can at least beat them about the head and shoulders on particular cases."

He expanded on the fundamental problem of the U.S. government using a disinformation campaign, that was manipulating the media. Hunter also provided some insight on one aspect of the government's foreign policy motivations:

"We do have pretty good civilian control in this country. And a pretty effective command chain. Reagan was faced with dilemmas: he wanted to give American people incompatible objectives; he wanted to get out hostages but he didn't want to deal with the devil. So he did it secretly. He wanted to get rid of the Sandinistas which American want but without anybody dying. The answer is the Contras. He wanted to teach Qadhafi a lesson but he didn't want to run any risks. So he did it through disinformation. Perfectly logical..."

Lyn Nofziger, President Reagan's former press secretary and now a political consultant in Washington, D.C., defined disinformation as lying by a government or an entity for its own purpose.13 He believed that disinformation was interwoven with propaganda, and he added that propaganda was a wide spread dissemination of information for selfish purposes, government purposes.

Regarding a current, coordinated disinformation policy or strategy within the U.S. government, Nofziger did not believe that one existed now and added:

"We have the U.S. Information Agency; we've been pretty above board about our propaganda, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, Radio Marti... In Russia and many other countries, the media is part of the government and the government is not accountable to the people. I don't think the American people would tolerate a disinformation program because in spite of anything, even though you are aiming your disinformation at foreign governments, the

American people would be affected by it too. And I think the American people would think that they have the right to rely on the truthfulness of what their government says. There are instances of disinformation, usually in wartime..."

He believed that a U.S.-sponsored disinformation program could probably be justified only in matters of national security. He also pointed out that the U.S. news media was very aggressive and suspicious, and that they would automatically suspect the government of disinformation.

Nofziger talked briefly on disinformation within the Defense Department and their leaking of misleading information to the media:

"You know the purpose there was to misinform or mislead countries that we assume are unfriendly to us...Libya, the Soviet Union and so forth. The problem is...you wind up also misleading the American people. And that's pretty hard to justify. The weakness of our democracy is that it's a democracy and you can't do all the things that you want to do because you're accountable to the people."

He did not think that the National Security Council should be involved with a disinformation program if the need for one arose. He identified the CIA as the organization to conduct such a campaign overseas.

Nofziger explained that the Wall Street Journal was not really a target of opportunity to plant the Libyan disinformation as the Administration expected that they could gain wide coverage from this newspaper. He also provided some additional comments about the media:

"...disinformation not only comes from government, but can also come from the media too. The failure of the media to cover some things or the failure of the media to give particular weight to some things as compared to others. What I'm thinking about here is not only the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, and the Gulf of Tonkin Incident which was a manufactured incident. But also you go back to the 1968 Tet Offensive which was a terrible disaster for the North Vietnamese, but the American press did not cover it as that. And there is a lot of documentation on that stuff. ...The liberal media sometimes decides they will cover or won't cover, they will make a big thing or won't make a big thing. And the Congress the same way."

CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Personal interview with Dr. Lawrence M. Martin-Bittman, Professor of Journalism, Boston University and Director of The Disinformation Documentation Center, Boston, Massachusetts, 14 April 1987. Direct quotes by Bittman throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[2]Personal interview with Herbert Romerstein, U.S. Information Agency, Washington, D.C., 29 April 1987. Direct quotes by Romerstein throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[3]Personal interview with Major General Charles D. Bussey, Army Chief of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C., 15 April 1987. Direct quotes by General Bussey throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[4]Personal interview with Navy Captain Jerry Burke, speechwriter for the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C., 15 April 1987. Direct quotes by Captain Burke throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[5]Personal interview with Lieutenant Colonel David Matthews, National Security Council Legislative Liaison, Washington, D.C., 17 April 1987. Direct quotes by Lt. Col. Matthews throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[6]Personal interview with Norman Black, Pentagon Correspondent, Associated Press, Washington, D.C., 20 April 1987. Direct quotes by Black throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[7]Personal interview with Tom Diaz, Assistant Managing Editor, The Washington Times, Washington, D.C., 16 April 1987. Direct quotes by Diaz throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[8]Personal interview with Fred Francis, Pentagon Correspondent, NBC News, Washington, D.C., 22 April 1987. Direct quotes by Francis throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[9]Personal interview with Vernon Guidry, Pentagon Correspondent, The Baltimore Sun, Washington, D.C., 16 April 1987. Direct quotes by Guidry throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[10]Personal interview with Dale Van Atta, Nationally Syndicated Columnist, Washington, D.C., 8 May 1987. Direct quotes by Van Atta throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[11]Personal interview with Carl Rochelle, Pentagon Correspondent, Cable News Network, Washington, D.C., 20 April 1987. Direct quotes by Rochelle throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[12]Personal interview with Dr. Robert Hunter, Director, European Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 21 April 1987. Direct quotes by Hunter throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[13]Personal interview with Lyn Nofziger, former press secretary to President Reagan, political consultant, Columbia, S.C., 23 March 1987. Direct quotes by Nofziger throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The closing comments in this chapter are aimed at proposing measures for journalists and public affairs personnel to avoid being caught in the web of disinformation. To understand the topic of disinformation, informants were asked:

1. How would you define disinformation?

2. How does disinformation differ from propaganda?

3. Does a disinformation policy exist in our federal government, similar to the Soviet Union Active Measures international strategy?

4. Could the use of a disinformation campaign by the U.S. government ever be justified...in what circumstances?

5. What are the signs to look for...to identify disinformation?

6. If a disinformation program is initiated within the administration, which agency should be given responsibility to develop the plan and run the program?

7. When the disinformation material was planted with the Wall Street Journal, was this newspaper just a 'target of opportunity' or is the administration partial to certain media?

Disinformation, informants say, is the deliberate dissemination of false information directed at a target audience. Propaganda, on the other hand, is a persuasive tool intended to influence public opinion. There is not a general consensus among the interviewees about whether a disinformation program of any type is currently being conducted by any

U.S. agency.

Opinions also vary on how could a U.S.-generated disinformation program be justified. The signs to look for in a disinformation campaign range from source credibility to style and grammar errors in news stories and publications. The CIA or the NSC are the only agencies identifiable as appropriate for managing a disinformation campaign, if deemed appropriate. As a result of the interviews, there are some additional questions that need to be answered:

* Is it ethical and legitimate to fight terrorism by using disinformation as a tool against terrorist groups? According to the news media representatives, there is never an appropriate time to use disinformation. Others interviewed could justify the use of disinformation as part of a more encompassing tactical deception plan. The negative aspect of using disinformation is the distinct possibility of "blowback" to the American media and public. With instant satellite communications, any piece of data provided by any foreign medium gets picked up by the wire services and rerun if a story is detected. On a positive note, disinformation could be used as an alternative to physical conflict.

* Did the Libyan disinformation campaign serve as a cover for the Iranian arms shipments which apparently secured the release of several U.S. hostages? In the interview with Dale Van Atta, a nationally syndicated columnist, he told of uncovering the U.S.-to-Iran arms sales in December 1985. He was informed by administration sources that if this account became public, the hostages may be killed. In the columns with Jack Anderson, Van Atta later harangued about Iran as the real

terrorist threat but said nothing about the arms-for-hostages dealings. The Iran-Contra situation gradually unfolded, and the administration's disinformation program against Libya faded from the news.

In more recent developments, a question about Soviet disinformation could be surfaced regarding the growth of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika.' The 1982 CIA intelligence estimate provided to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence during the Soviet Active Measures hearings, forewarned about the Soviet Union's "tactical deemphasis of Communist ideology."1 * Are 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' a massive disinformation effort to mask another Soviet attempt to achieve a strategic foreign policy objective? Only time will tell on this one.

* Who can create or plant disinformation? The answer is almost anyone who can gain access to and secure the trust of a required medium. Private figures, public figures, or public officials are all potential sources providing they establish some sense of credibility with an information broker. Even the media can generate disinformation; though it is more likely to occur in a Communist or Communist-backed society.

* Who is considered the largest threat to create additional disinformation throughout the world? The answer is the Soviet Union, through the KGB. U.S. agencies including the CIA, the State Department, and the U.S. Information Agency, are all on-guard to the distinct possibility of Soviet deception. In the fall of 1988, the U.S. and Soviet Union proposed a joint venture to prevent the spread of 'Moscow-inspired' disinformation throughout the world. USIA Director Charles Z. Wick, speaking at the National Press Club, told of the 'early warning

system' plan to permit the U.S. to challenge deception efforts:

> "They recognize that this (disinformation), once part of the war of words, is counterproductive and impeaches Mr. Gorbachev's credibility."2

Whoever or whatever the proponency, disinformation affects credibility and ill-serves a democracy. Both our government and the news media need to guard against deception efforts. When questioned about the selection of the Wall Street Journal as the medium to disseminate the Libyan disinformation, informants agree that the WSJ reporter happened to be at the right place at the wrong time, thus was victimized by the NSC officer. To avoid future abuse, the media should employ the following procedures:

* Thoroughly source their stories. Journalists need to consult all the subject matter experts, speak to the scholars, and ask the right questions. Getting assistance from research librarians, making use of their computer-search capabilities, and perusing the current literature can be beneficial. In the author's case, pretesting the questions provided positive results. Use multiple sources.

* News managers/editors need to take a harder look at their people and then assign the right people to the stories. The managers need to cultivate their own staff and make a conscious attempt to educate their people. Journalists need to recognize when the "flags are being raised" and how to avoid being victimized; that is a conduit for disinformation.

* Reporters should use the U.S. Information Agency's assistance service. Journalsits should contact public affairs and press officers for help with questionable stories or sources. They should also consult knowledgeable peers.

The government should take a more active role in providing information:

* Circluate more literature on how to identify the signs of disinformation.

* Identify (with their consent) the subject matter experts and let journalists know how to contact them.

The implications of this study are that Soviet Active Measures interfere with our ability to understand the issues. Through its propaganda and psychological warfare proponents, the U.S. government can also sponsor similar types of deception. Our government must help protect the media from being coopted. Alert news managers, educated journalists and responsive public affairs officers are needed to combat the attempts to disinform a society. As a former insider of the massive Communist machine, Professor Bittman best describes what needs to be done, stating in his book that, "Successful defense against Soviet-bloc disinformation and active measures depends largely on broad and sound knowledge of their methods, weapons, and tactics."3 It is hoped that this thesis can contribute to that end.

CHAPTER NOTES

[1]"Soviet Active Measures," Hearings Before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House of Representatives, 97th Congress, (13, 14 July 1982), p. 50.

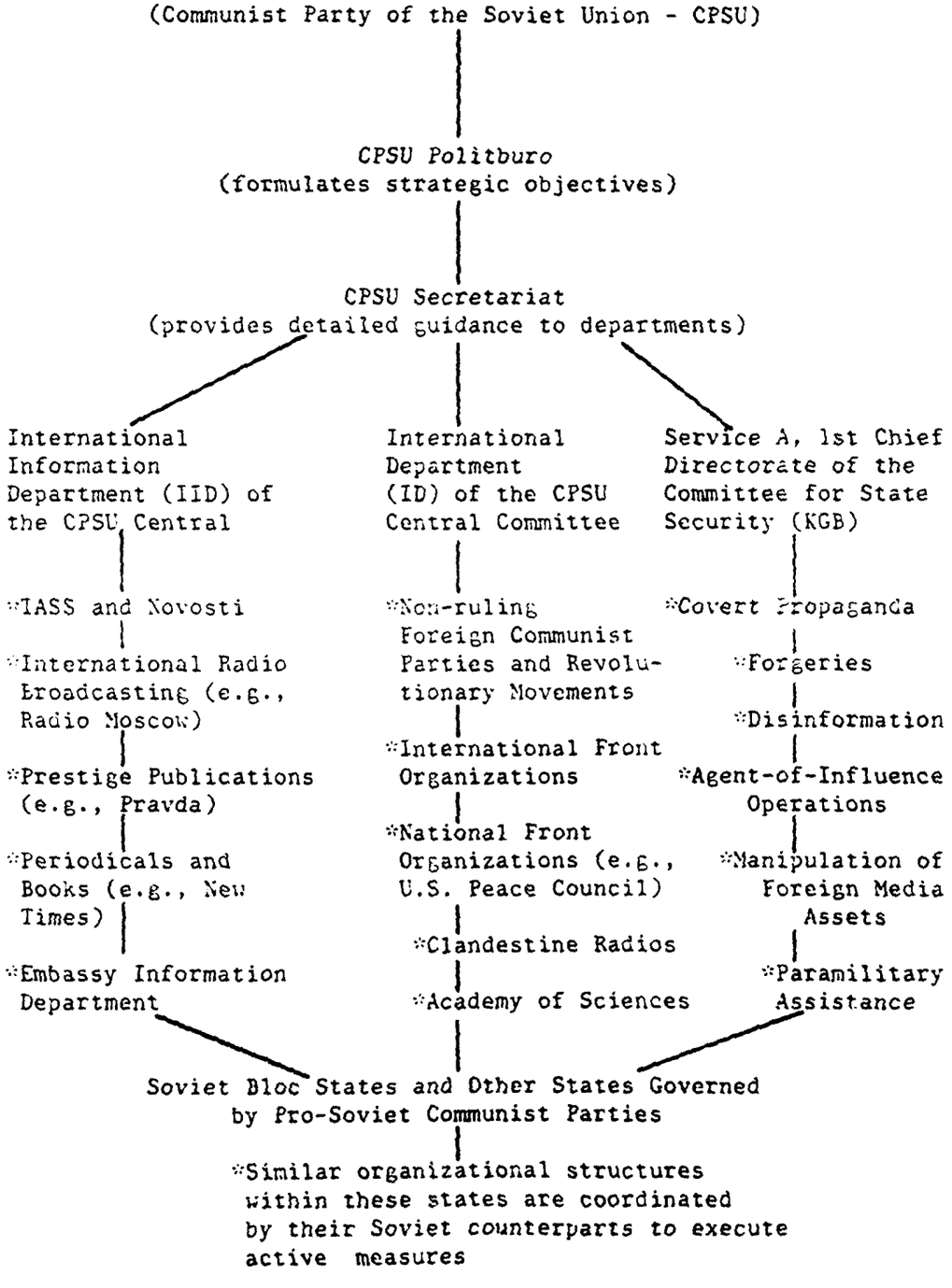
[2]Bill Gertz, "U.S., Moscow Agree to Snuff Disinformation," Washington Times, (13 October 1988), p. 3.

[3]Ladislav Bittman, The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View (McLean, VA: Pergamon-Brassey, 1985), p. 220.

APPENDIX A

SOVIET ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR

ACTIVE MEASURES

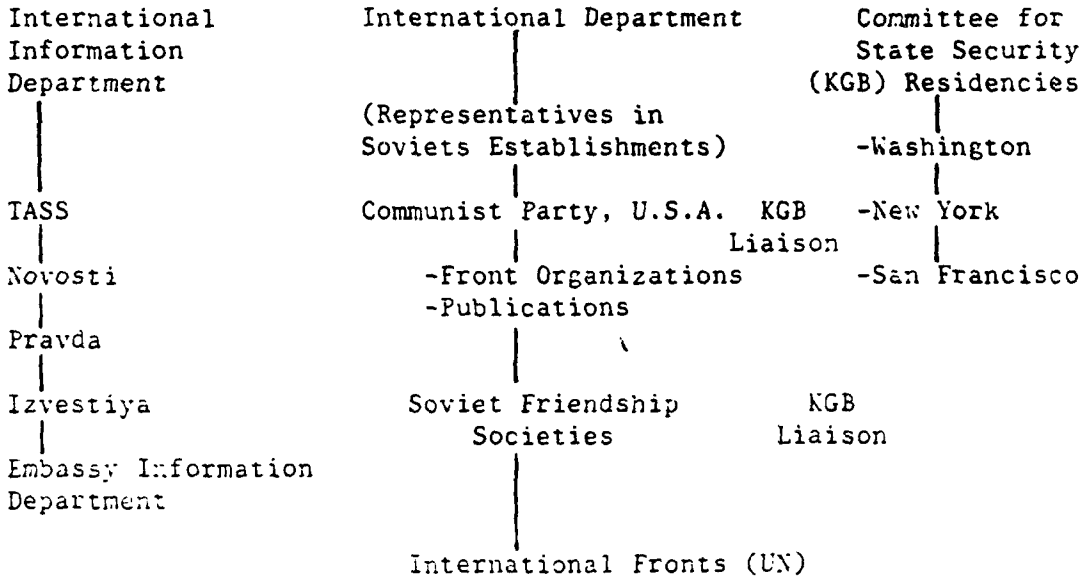


(Shultz-p.20)

APPENDIX B

SOVIET APPARATUS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR ACTIVE MEASURES

(Policies and Plans Coordinated at the Headquarters Level)



(Select Committee Hearings, p.229)

APPENDIX C

DISINFORMATION CHANNELS

MAJOR SOVIET-BACKED INTERNATIONAL FRONTS

1. World Peace Council (WPC) - Established in 1949. Principal activities focus on Soviet peace campaigns, publications, congresses, and coordination of other international fronts.

2. World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) - Established in 1945. Principal focus is coordination of Communist trade unions worldwide, publications, training, financing, educational programs, and seeking "unity" between Communist and non-Communist unions.

3. Afro-Asian People's Sol darity Organization (ASPSO) - Established in 1957. Principal function is to serve as a channel for Soviet influence in the Third World.

4. World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) - Established in 1945. Principal function is to support Soviet peace campaigns through publications, congresses, and World Youth Festivals.

5. International Union of Students (IUS) - Established in 1946. Principal functions are quite similar to those of the WFDY.

6. International Institute for Peace (IIP) - Established in 1958. Closely associated with the WPC. Principal function is to direct the Forum for East-West Discussions Between Scientists.

7. International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) - Established in 1952. Principal function is to support Soviet peace campaigns, human rights campaigns, and other causes through publications, conferences, and similar activities.

8. Christian Peace Conference (CPC) - Established in 1958. Principal function is to develop Christian and theological support for Soviet peace policies.

9. Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) - Established in 1945. Principal activities focus on publications, meetings, and seminars in support of general Soviet foreign policy goals.

10. International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) - Established in 1946. Principal activities are publications and conferences in support of general Soviet foreign policy goals.

(Shultz-p.24-25)

Appendix D

LIBYA'S TRAIL OF TERROR AND U.S. RESPONSES

London, April 11, 1980: A free-lance Libyan journalist was assassinated by two gunmen outside the Islamic center mosque. Two Libyan suspects were detained by Scotland Yard.

Rome, April 19, 1980: A Libyan businessman was assassinated in a cafe. The assailant was apprehended a short distance away - a Libyan.

London, April 25, 1980: A Libyan lawyer was shot and killed at an Arab legal center. The assassins were believed to be members of Qadhafi's death squads.

Rome, May 10, 1980: A Libyan businessman was assassinated and a Libyan suspect was being held.

Bonn, May 19, 1980: A Libyan businessman was shot dead in the city center. This former diplomat had received death threats prior to his assassination by a Libyan.

Athens, May 21, 1980: A young Libyan was found dead in his home. Local authorities said the victim was an outspoken critic of Qadhafi.

Fort Collins, Colo., Oct. 14, 1980: A Libyan graduate student was shot and wounded. The student was known as an opponent of the Libyan regime.

Washington, D.C., March 18, 1981: Secretary of State Alexander Haig accused Libya of training terrorists.

Washington, D.C., May 6, 1981: U.S. ordered the Libyan embassy shut down, citing unacceptable conduct.

Odgen, Utah, July 17, 1981: A body believed to be that of a Libyan student was found in the trunk of his car. A Libyan national, also a student, suspected of the murder was arrested at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago as he was attempting to travel to Tripoli.

The Mediterranean, August 19, 1981: U.S. Navy aircraft shot down attacking Libyan jets over the Gulf of Sidra.

Washington, D.C., November 22, 1981: The U.S. government reported a Libyan plot against President Reagan.

Washington, D.C., December 10, 1981: President Reagan invalidated all U.S. passports for Libya travel, calling for Americans to leave Libya.

Washington, D.C., February 26, 1982: The U.S. identified Libya as an ally of international terrorists.

Libya, March 3, 1982: Qadhafi threatened war over the Gulf of Sidra.

Washington, D.C., March 10, 1982: The U.S. barred Libyan crude oil imports and curtailed high tech exports.

Madrid, July 1982: The U.S. embassy in Madrid learned of a Libyan plot to assassinate Saudi Arabia's King Fahd (State Department cable).

Lebanon, December 1982: Libya sent armed contingents to north Lebanon to carry out attacks against the multinational forces in an effort to increase unrest in the zone.

Rome, December 1982: The U.S. embassy in Rome reported a Libyan plot to help "separate Sardinia from Italy." Fifteen Sardinians had bee arrested in the conspiracy.

Tripoli, February 1983: Libya's Tripoli People's Congress adopted a series of resolutions which called for spending part of Libya's oil wealth on arms for "all the revolutionary forces in the Arab and Islamic worlds." The resolution called for "suicide squads" to be formed to press attacks inside Arab territory occupied by Israel and against the symbols of treason in the Arab arena who "follow the imperialist camp headed by the United States, the leader of world terrorism."

Egypt, February 16, 1983: The U.S. sent AWACs radar planes to Egypt citing the Libyan threat to Sudan.

Switzerland, April 1983: The Swiss government expelled the Libyan charge d'affaires for supplying weapons to two convicted Swiss terrorists.

Germany, April 1983: Libya took eight German technicians hostage in order to blackmail West Germany into releasing Libyans charged with violent crimes.

Jordan, June 1983: The Libyan envoy to Jordan defected. The ambassador revealed Col. Qadhafi's plan to use missiles to destroy the aircraft carrying King Hussein.

The Mediterranean, August 1, 1983: The U.S. intercepted Libyan warplanes over the Gulf of Sidra.

Chad, August 3, 1983: The U.S. sent arms and advisors to Chad to assist in that country's fight against Libya.

Sudan, August 6, 1983: The U.S. sent AWACs planes to Sudan as Libyan-backed Chad rebels overrun key positions.

Sudan, March 1984: A Libyan bomber invaded Sudanese airspace and attacked a radio-TV station.

Jordan, March 1984: The U.S. embassy in Amman, Jordan, reported on a plot to destroy the Jordanian embassy in Libya. The cable said the Jordanian prime minister had provided details about the planned attack.

Egypt, March 18, 1984: The U.S. again sent AWACs to Egypt to support Sudan against Libyan-backed rebels.

London, April 1984: During anti-Qadhafi demonstrations, two gunmen in the Libyan "People's Bureau" opened fire on the crowd killing an unarmed police woman who was attempting to keep the demonstrators orderly and provide security for the Libyans.

Washington, D.C., May 8, 1984: U.S. intelligence sources reported a rebel raid on Qadhafi's compound.

Libya, September 1, 1984: Qadhafi denied a Libyan plot against Mecca but the news media continued to report the allegation.

Washington, D.C., October 3, 1984: The U.S. government charged Libya with the Red Sea mine operation.

Chad, February 1985: The government lodged a complaint in the United Nations claiming that Libya had attempted to assassinate President Hissen Habre in September 1984.

Chicago, February 1985: At a convention of members of the Nation of Islam headed by Louis Farrakhan, Qadhafi, speaking over closed-circuit television, called for black Americans "to immediately leave the military and fight with his support for an independent black state. We are ready to give you arms," he proclaimed.

Washington, D.C., April 12, 1985: The U.S. government reported an assassination attempt on Qadhafi by Libyan malcontents.

The United States, May 1985: Our government uncovered a Libyan plot to assassinate anti-Qadhafi Libyans in the U.S. As a result, a Libyan diplomat at the U.N. was declared persona non grata.

Libya, May 1985: Qadhafi threatened a terrorist campaign against "his enemies" by stating: "I am a terrorist. I would, if I could, behead the rulers of other Arab nations that oppose me." Also uncovered were plans to assassinate American ambassadors in several Middle Eastern countries and at least one European capital. In addition, Libyan "hit quads" have been sent throughout the world to murder exiled Libyans in an overall effort to intimidate dissidents.

Bangladesh, June 1985: A Libyan-trained Bangladeshi national who had received Libyan support in an earlier coup attempt was arrested for plotting to kill President Hossain Mohammad Ershad.

United States, November 4, 1985: The U.S. news media reported a CIA plot against the Qadhafi regime.

Washington, D.C., November 15, 1985: The U.S. government banned the importation of refined Libyan oil.

Rome, Vienna, December 27, 1985: Terrorists attack Rome and Vienna airports killing 19 and wounding 110. Libya and PLO factions believed responsible.

Washington, D.C., January 7, 1986: President Reagan banned nearly all transactions with Libya by U.S. companies and individuals, ordered Americans to leave Libya, and asked Europe to join sanctions.

Washington, D.C., January 8, 1986: President Reagan froze Libyan assets in the U.S. Qadhafi called U.S. actions "tantamount" to a declaration of war.

Libya, March 4, 1986: Libya's legislature called for the formation of suicide squads to attack U.S. and Israeli interests according JANA, the official Libyan news agency.

Athens, April 2, 1986: An explosion on a TWA jet killed 4 and wounded 5 Americans. Coming nine days after the U.S.-Libyan confrontation in the Gulf of Sidra, this attack raised questions of possible retaliation by Qadhafi or by the Islamic extremist groups he supports.

West Berlin, April 5, 1986: An American soldier and a Turkish woman were killed and 155 wounded in a bomb explosion at a Berlin night club. A Libyan role in the bombing was suspected.

Libya, April 14, 1986: U.S. forces conducted a joint service air attack on military targets in Libya in retaliation for Qadhafi's role in the Berlin Disco bombing. U.S. officials contended that there was irrefutable evidence the People's Bureau in East Berlin arranged the act of terrorism.

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